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# 사회학석사학위논문

대한민국 20 대 남성의 성적 정체성과 퀴어성적 연구:  
양성애자 정체성 및 수행성을 중심으로

Queer Identity and Sexuality in South Korea:  
A Critical Analysis via Male Bisexuality

2013 년 8 월

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이 논문을 사회학석사 학위논문으로 제출함.

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## 초록

본 연구는 최근 한국에서 ‘성적 정체성’과 ‘성적 지향’ 간의 차이에 관해 다룬다. 이를 위해 자신의 성적 정체성을 양성애자로 규정하는 남성들을 대상으로 한 것이다. 이들은 한국에서 발생기에 있는 퀴어 집단이다. 한국에서는 퀴어 관련 연구들조차 종종 성적 정체성과 성적 지향을 동일한 것으로 여기고 있으며, 지금까지 성적 정체성의 차원이나 성적 지향의 차원에서 양성애자들을 다룬 연구는 존재하지 않았다. 게이들의 성적 정체성은 세계적 추세에 따라 주목받기도 했고, 두 명의 연예인 - 한 명은 최근에 TV 프로그램을 통해 커밍아웃했고, 다른 한 명은 수술을 통해 성전환한 것을 밝혔다 - 에 의해 관심이 촉발되기도 했다. 전반적인 초점은 게이 남성의 성적 정체성에 맞춰지고 있으며, 퀴어나 퀴어의 성적 지향성은 상대적으로 주목 받지 못했다. 그 결과 기존 연구들은 게이를 일반화하는 문제를 갖고 있으며 퀴어를 구체적 행위 속에서 인식하지 못 하는 결과를 낳았다. 본 연구에서는 성적 지향과 성적 정체성 간의 역동적 관계를 이해하기 위한 방편으로서 양성애자에 관심을 가져야 한다는 것을 제안하려 한다. 또한 본 연구에서는 20-27세의 한국인 남성 중 양성애자-동성애자-이성애자를 각각 5명씩 면담하여 그들의 구술이 보여주는 인터뷰 패턴을 비교 분석함으로써 양성애(자) 정체성과 지향성이 한국 사회의 맥락 속에서 갖는 특수한 의미들을 보여 주고자 한다.

**주요어:** 퀴어, 퀴어성적, 양성애자 정체성, 양성애자 수행성, 성적 지향, 성적 정체성, 섹스

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**Note on Romanization:** Throughout this work the *Revised Romanization of Korean* created by the National Academy of the Korean Language in 2000 will be used whenever possible. However, for all words and proper nouns that have been crystallized in the *McCune-Reischauer* Romanization over time, I will endeavor to maintain the tradition.

**Note on Interview Notations:**

(Parenthesis) have been used as when the interviewer provides a question while conducting the interview.

{Wavy brackets} have been used to provide contextual meaning to in interview dialogue when context may be missing from the conversation; this should not be interpreted as the words of the interviewee.

[Brackets] have been used to identify the interviewee.

## I. Introduction

### 1. Background

If the integration of an institutional order can be understood only in terms of the “knowledge” that its members have of it, it follows that the analysis of that “knowledge” will be essential for an analysis of the institutional order in question. It is important to stress that this does not exclusively or even primarily involve a preoccupation with complex theoretical systems serving as legitimations for the institutional order. Theories also have to be taken into account, of course. But theoretical knowledge is only a small part and by no means the most important part of what passes for knowledge in a society...The primary knowledge about the institutional order is knowledge on the pre-theoretical level....It is the sum total of “what everybody knows” about a social world, an assemblage of maxims, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values and beliefs, myths and so forth, the theoretical integration of which requires considerable intellectual fortitude in itself...

Berger & Luckmann’s *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966)<sup>1</sup>

When thinking about sex, Gayle S. Rubin wrote “...the concrete institutional forms of sexuality at any given time and place are products of human activity. They are imbued with conflicts of interest and political maneuvering, both deliberate and incidental. In that sense, sex is always political. But there are also historical periods in which sexuality is more sharply contested and more overtly politicized. In such periods, the domain of erotic life is, in effect, renegotiated.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Stuart Hall’s “Deviance, Politics, and the Media,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, Routledge, 1993, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality.” p. 4.

South Korea is now in the period of sexual renegotiation.<sup>3</sup> Diverse sexual identities are only now beginning to take form through dialogue, instigated often in the heat of moral crusades against sexual deviance and sex crimes.<sup>4</sup> These newly emerging identities are also premised on erroneous notions of heterosexual normality, and in recent academic works in the country the question of the relationship between sexual orientation and sexual identity has often gone unanswered or even bypassed altogether. The dearth of gender research focusing on this question has led to a growing political divide marked not by queer—including its various sexual cognates—versus the mainstream, but rather one beset by an overtly politicized pole between the undefined “homosexual” and the over-generalized heterosexual.<sup>5</sup> Currently, no studies focus on ascertaining just

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<sup>3</sup> While some argue that media has led to this sudden surge in interest in sexuality. Others argue that sexuality is inextricably connected to economic factors. And still others argue that discrimination and a vested interest in citizenship has indirectly led to questions of sexual identity in relation to citizenship and equal rights. And still others have posited a Huntington-style of civilization in which Western sexual deviance have come face-to-face in a battle against an Eastern ethic of sexual repression. I propose a different formation scheme in Sec. I (2)b.

<sup>4</sup> For example, in September 2012, President Lee Myung-bak said that “Obscene materials and harmful information that can be easily accessed on the Internet are singled out as one cause inciting sex crimes.” Moreover, it is not my intention to remark that there has been no dialogue on sexuality in Korea. In fact, the exact opposite; the non-academic discourse on sexuality has in fact led to the production and transmission of binding forces between identity and sexuality in the country. This will be further developed in Chapter 1; 3a.

<sup>5</sup> In one case, one scholar goes about tackling the plurality of sexuality by ignoring it all together and settling the matter with heterosexuals as monolith, and everything else as non-heterosexual. The academic atmosphere, as such, however is not far from just a polarity. Clearly, in the current state of affairs it would be impossible to talk about the homosexual versus the non-homosexual in South Korea, primarily because the former has yet to be

what sexual orientations exist in South Korea and in what ways the people falling within them interpret themselves, their actions, and the means by which they came to realize their chosen sexual identities. Instead, the overwhelming tendency is to substantiate gender, sexualities,<sup>6</sup> sexual orientations, and sexual identity<sup>7</sup> by interpreting them as inextricable tools linked to politics.<sup>8</sup> This in turn has led to the misconception that investigation into their formation is negligible.<sup>9</sup> What is lost is the realization that “sexuality acts itself out in space...[yet]...the question of

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defined. (See 서동진 “성적 시민권과 비이성애자 주체” in “한국의 소수자, 실태와 전망.”)

<sup>6</sup> Meaning how people experience and express themselves as sexual beings.

<sup>7</sup> Sexual identity typically refers to a complex concept used to describe the degree to which a person identifies with the social or biological aspects of being a man or woman, in which sexual orientation is an important part. In this paper, however, I employ the term as the identification of self to others based on one’s perception of sexual orientation, i.e. as a term denoting the user’s sexual orientation (e.g. gay, straight, bisexual, etc.).

<sup>8</sup> Despite the growth of research focusing on gay & homosexuality identities in South Korea in recent years, there have been only a few works that delve into the question of sexuality with a focus specifically on male sexuality that attempts to go beyond the homo-heterosexual binary in the country (e.g. Culture & Sexuality, Tae-Sook Lee, 2004; Birth of Man, Yin-gwan Jun, 2003; Masculinity & Gender, Kimhyunyoung Gwan, et al. 2011). Moreover, no studies in South Korea address the complex relationship of sexual orientation & sexual identity aside from ones that promote the far-reaching assumptions that sexual identity is primarily a choice forced upon society by Western culture and capitalist forces. The question of pre-adolescent & adolescent sexual activity has only been addressed by one writer, and no one has yet formulated any connection between this writer’s findings and self-identified sexual identities (see Teen Sex, Happy Sexuality: Teens, Adolescents, and Sexuality, Hyejung Byun, 2010). In most other accounts, “non-heterosexual” orientations are still treated as deviations that are no doubt only observed through a heterosexual/ non-heterosexual or heterosexual/ homosexual paradigm.

<sup>9</sup> Korean scholars often adopt US-based feminist works that used the linkage between gender-bias and inequality as a means of making sexual identity, and in particular gender, into a salient political issue. In so doing, however, the definition of gender and sexual identity has often lacked deep review in sociological studies.

space [is] already inscribed in the question of sexuality,”<sup>10</sup> and as Clare Hemmings points out in *Bisexual Landscapes*, “...sexuality is enacted in relationships to other...and gains meaning in relation to community.”<sup>11</sup> For these reasons, space and place—communities & countries alike—require immediate attention when attempting to understand the complex boundaries (or lack thereof) of genders, sexual orientations, and sexual identities. In particular, understanding whether such categorical fixtures exist in their own right within a community or whether their manifestation or creation are part and parcel of global necessity is paramount to any attempt at thinking about sex. However, few scholars have, beyond peripheral considerations, ventured into answering what constitutes gender, sexuality and sexual identity in South Korea. And even fewer have attempted to gain Berger & Luckmann’s “knowledge” from its members, which in itself gives life to my belief that assumptions about sex in Western cultures are so pervasive that they inhibit the development of theories of and about sex anywhere else. This study focuses on the relationship between sexual behavior and sexual identity, with the understanding that sexual identity and its formation is neither universal, static, nor distinctly a mere reflection of gender, sexual

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<sup>10</sup> Beatriz Colomina, *Introduction to Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), ii.

<sup>11</sup> Clare Cummings, *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender*, (Routledge), 2002. p. 45.

orientation, and/ or sexual position (i.e. active or passive/ penetrator or penetrated).

There currently have been no attempts, written in Korean or otherwise, to understand sexual identities and their formation through the analysis of bi-curious or bisexual, sexually active individuals in South Korea, who are either self-identified or non-identified.<sup>12</sup> As a result, there have also been no attempts to address the implications of changing sexual identity in South Korea from the views of arguably its most reflexive members. This study attempts to do just that: to analyze the interpretation of self & other as a means of better understanding sexual identity and its formation. In particular, it aims at understanding the significance and differences between sexual behavior and sexual identity in South Korea. Through in-depth interviews and borrowing much from the empirical works in queer theories regarding desire and body,<sup>13</sup> this research investigates

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<sup>12</sup> It has been argued that bisexuality is not a gendered subject primarily because its members must be seen along a continuum vacillating between homosexuality or heterosexuality. However, I would argue here that the lack of gendered context in which bisexuals can prove the performative qualities necessary for gender-fication does not itself lead outright to gender-fication nor lack of research value in terms of sexuality, sexual orientation, or sexual identity of bisexuals. Instead, I agree with Foucault's claim that the dissolution of Victorian "...triple edict of taboo, nonexistence, and silence," and the subsequent discourse of sex, including bisexuality, allows for its place in the ontological realm of sexual identity. (Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1, p. 5.)

<sup>13</sup> Gayle Rubin points out the limitations of using feminism in understanding theories on sex. In particular, the feminist emphasis on sexual liberation is inherently tied to notions of male dominance that does not tie well in understanding sexual diversity. (See Gayle S.

bisexual identity formation and interpretation from sexually active male individuals<sup>14</sup> between the ages of 20-27, which is arguably the ages in which sexual renegotiation in South Korea is most active.<sup>15</sup>

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How is bisexuality interpreted in South Korea in terms of sexual behavior and sexual identity?
2. In what ways do bisexuals differentiate themselves from other sexualities in the country?
3. What social factors have led to or deterred the development of bisexuality as a social identity in the country?
4. What influence, if any, does the existence of bisexuality have on queer-related studies and discrimination policies in the country?

To answer the above questions, a general inquiry into bisexuality and its meaning in queer studies will help to put its development in South Korea into perspective.

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Rubin's "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*.)

<sup>14</sup> It is my contention that the men's formation of sexual identity in Korea is quite different from that of women particularly due to differences in social expectations and also due to Korea's male-only compulsory military service requirement. Based on these factors, I believe that the case of women must be studied in a different context than that of men. This idea was also presented to be the case in Blumstein and Schwartz's 1974, 1976z, 1976b works, in which they "...dealt with bisexuality separately, and had dealt with the different factors involved for the different sexes." (In "Bisexuality: Some Social Psychological Issues" (1977) in Merl Storr's *Bisexuality: a critical reader* (1999), p. 59.)

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter II (1)

## **2. Related Works: Bisexuality Studies--Origins and Development**

The belief that bisexuality does not exist, or that it is omnipresent in every person thus making it devoid of the characteristics of a true sexual identity is common. This is caused primarily by bisexuality's lack of a gender or sexuality based theoretical framework. To date, most theories on bisexuality are based in psychology, empirical sociology, or sexual-identity politics.<sup>16</sup> However, in the 1960s and tempered primarily by a heightened desire of feminist scholars to understand the association of rape & fetish to sexuality & sexual relations on a social level<sup>17</sup>, many scholars began to question sexual orientation beyond heterosexual and homosexual identities. The works of three scholars in particular, Margaret Mead, Charlotte Wolff, and Fritz Klein, first introduced bisexuality as an academic subject. Prior to such time, bisexuality had been ignored though scholars on homosexuality had argued that it exists.<sup>18</sup> Instead, academic works focused on 'opposite sex' relations, while other sex relations were primarily depicted only in

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<sup>16</sup> Clare Hemmings. *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender*. Routledge. p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> There are three primary reasons behind this new academic interest. The "Free Love" movement of the late-1960s coupled with the proliferation of big business pornography and the Second Wave Feminist movement that linked Body and Politics in scholarship led to both a growth in the recognition of more sexual identities and to an interest in understanding male sexuality.

<sup>18</sup> This was shown to be the half-way mark between heterosexuality and homosexuality on the Kinsey Scale at 3. The idea of bisexuality was also taken up by Fritz Klein in his *The Bisexual Option: A Concept of One Hundred Percent Intimacy* (1978).



fictional works and psychoanalytical literature. These works often read bisexuality as “...physical or psychical hemaphroditism, as psychical androgyny, or as the ground from which heterosexual or homosexual adult sexual orientation evolves.”<sup>19</sup> It was in this commodification, the literary fiction of sexuality, that a ‘blending’ of the masculine and the feminine, or what was seen as gender inversion in transition at the time, gained attention.

Despite making bisexuality both an academic subject of inquiry and a possible sexual orientation and latent identity, these early works were followed by a long silence on the subject.<sup>20</sup> The reasons are uncertain, however writing specifically on the United States, Gayle Rubin (1984) argues that a new wave of violence, state persecution, and legal initiatives directed against minority sexual populations and the commercial sex industry came about in the 1970s and consequently suppressed the issue.<sup>21</sup> Others argue that bisexuality simply took a backseat while political and academic concerns centered on feminism and male homosexual issues.<sup>22</sup> Regardless of the validity of either claim, the 1980s ushered in a renewed interest in bisexuality that centered on studying it as an identity beyond

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<sup>19</sup> Hemmings. p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 17. “There is virtually no writing in English on bisexuality as a viable personal and political concern or choice until the late 1980s.”

<sup>21</sup> Gayle S. Rubin. 1984. “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality.” p. 145.

<sup>22</sup> See Rodríguez Rust, Paula C. 2002. “Bisexuality: The State of the Union.” *Society for the Scientific Study of Sex*. 13: 180-240.

mere sexual attraction, and with a genuine concern that bisexuality could lead to an HIV/ AIDS epidemic that would spread the disease from gay men to heterosexual women. However with HIV/ AIDS ignorance aside, some social scientists—focusing specifically on queer sexual orientation—have rejected the heterosexual/ homosexual paradigm and instead have proposed alternative conceptualization of sexuality.<sup>23</sup>

Another view of the evolution of bisexuality posits the general idea that sexual relations in 19th century in European influenced societies such as the US and England, which defined manhood and womanhood by the sexual division of labor. The Victorian era established a script of gendered roles that primarily functioned as social management similar to Foucault's *Deployment of Alliances*, i.e. marriage as population control (See I.3.a). Marriage was seen as less a bond based on affection and love, and more one of survival and social management founded on familial bonds. By the early 20th century, the result of economic forces<sup>24</sup> and an infatuation with the body<sup>25</sup>, marriage divorced the idea of mere control and management alone,

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<sup>23</sup> Spence, Janet T. & Helmreich, Robert L. 1981. "Theoretical Notes: Androgyny Versus Gender Schema: A Comment on Bem's Gender Schema Theory." *Psychological Review*. Vol. 88. No. 4, 365-368; McCall, Leslie. 1992. "Does gender fit? Bourdieu, feminism, and conceptions of social order." *Theory and Society*. 21: 837-867.

<sup>24</sup> Jon Binnie (2004). "Chapter 4: The Economics of Queer Globalization" in *The Globalization of Sexuality*. pp. 50-66.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Lock. (1993). "Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge" *Annual Review Anthropology*. p. 134.

and eloped with the idea that sexual attraction and desire fulfillment were strong predictors of healthy and long-lasting relationships.

This new, more individualistic concept of self-fulfillment unveiled a bisexual livelihood that had already existed, but was simply not displayed publicly. The 19th century gender-roles had created a segregated setting in which men and women lived very different lives, with different concerns, and often drew comfort, emotionally and physically, outside of marriage with same-sex contacts. Despite these sexual relations, said men and women maintained much of their identity primarily because, during those times, sexual identities were defined by the existence of a wife, a husband, or children, in which case suspicions were summarily dismissed.<sup>26</sup>

The 20th century transformed men and women from family members to erotic individuals, nullifying the idea that family ties evinced one's sexual habits. And this is exactly what sex became—no longer a conjugation fortifying love—but a habit, one that required study and constant control, and one that also opened the way for sexual deviance.

In this new age, people became increasingly interested in understanding “deviant” sexual behavior. Same-sex activities that were seen

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. cit. 7. p. 182.

as “inverting,” later coined “homosexuality,”<sup>27</sup> became an important part of many late-20th century feminist movements as well as the motivation for considering the existence of different types of sexual and sexualized people. It was this historical rise of agents of “deviant” sex that led to a paradoxical understanding of bisexuality as pitted betwixt and between homosexuality and heterosexuality—or as a sexual identity and behavior that is simply inconceivable.

In contemporary society, bisexuals are seen as individuals who are conflicted between their heterosexual and homosexual halves—confused folk in transition. Bisexuality in gender studies, however, is understood as a complex cultural construct within a Bourdieau-ian social framework,<sup>28</sup> causing it to fall outside the norm of other constructions that are generally accepted as pure forms of sexuality. Yet, perhaps the most significant change in understanding bisexuals was the influence of US media that led to a wave of people claiming a bisexual identity.

P. Rust, among others, has found that the United States in the 1970s and 80s experienced a cultural phenomenon set on the idea of “invalidating

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 183.

<sup>28</sup> McCall, Ibid. cit. 8.

beliefs.”<sup>29</sup> This social change not only led to transformative and experimental sexual behaviors, but also invigorated a new ‘sex positive’ lifestyle that promoted sexual freedom and led to the growth of bisexual communities in cities such as San Francisco.<sup>30</sup> According to Rust, “...popular news magazines proclaimed bisexuality ‘chic’ in the 1970s.” As can be imagined, this led to a new sexual enclave that gained not only membership but also academic attention. Though the AIDS epidemic turned this positive outlook on sexual freedom into a dangerously negative one, the fad of bisexuality arguably renewed in the 21st century promotion of the metrosexual man who displays feminine as well as masculine qualities, but not necessarily sexually. This fluctuating yet somewhat linear progression of bisexuality and bisexual studies in the US differs starkly from that of South Korea’s.<sup>31</sup>

Though I have presented a generally overt Western-centric evaluation of bisexuality above, it is the lack of such development that will be the basis from which to better understand bisexuality and sexuality in South Korea.

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<sup>29</sup> P. Rust. (1995) Bisexual experiences, identities, and politics. Paper presented at the International Academy of Sex Research Annual Meeting, Provincetown, MA.

<sup>30</sup> Blumstein & Schwartz. 1976. “Bisexuality in men.” *Urban Life*. 5(3), 339-358; Dworkin. 2001. “Bisexuality histories in San Francisco in the 1970s and early 1980s.” *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1, 87-119. ; Hutchins, L. 1996. “Bisexuality: Politics and community.” In B.A. Firestein et. al. *Bisexuality: The psychology and politics of an invisible minority*. pp. 240-259.

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter III.

With this in mind, we now turn to understanding the theoretical approach necessary in addressing bisexuality in South Korea.

## II. Theoretical Foundations

### 1. Theoretical Framework

Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1978) dispelled a long-held misconception about sex and sexuality, that the taboo, religious, and Victorian forces of the past had silenced discourse on sexuality. Such was the "repressive hypothesis"<sup>32</sup> that had served as the basis of gender and sexology studies from the 17th to mid-20th century. 'Lack of dialogue' and forced repression seemed to function, for the most part, as the *excuse principale* of psychological, social, and historical understandings of sex and sexuality. Not only did Foucault argue that the topic of sexuality had long been a part of discourse in Western societies, but also that the intricate connection between "truth"<sup>33</sup> and sex had led to the latter becoming a strong part of the Western reliance on confession as the primary means toward the former. "The truthful confession was inscribed at the heart of the procedures of individualization...[in which] Western man has become a

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<sup>32</sup> Michel Foucault. (1978). *The History of Sexuality: Vol I: An Introduction*. (Vintage Books). p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> Foucault further explains this reliance on confession as linked primarily to Roman-catholic Christianity, even served as the basis of releasing oneself of the guilt associated with sexual acts "From the Christian penance to the present day, sex was a privileged theme of confession." p. 61.

confessing animal.”<sup>34</sup> Such “truth” rituals have become a common source of security and significance, especially in the Western queer world.

Yet even more significant for us, Foucault also found that the Western preoccupation with understanding the ‘unnatural’ sexual impulses particularly of “...children, mad men and women, and criminals,”<sup>35</sup> with science, led to both an array of behavioral-based classifications of sexuality, and also to a growing connection between these categories and people’s identities. This is primarily because “...it [the notion of sex] made it possible to invert the representation of the relationships of power to sexuality, causing the latter to appear, not in its essential and positive relation to power, but as being rooted in a specific and irreducible urgency which power tries as best it can to dominate; thus the idea of ‘sex’ makes it possible to evade what gives ‘power’ to power...[and] enables one to conceive power solely as law and taboo.”<sup>36</sup> This idea of sex also leads us to the initial question that relates to my thesis, namely, where does all this talk of sex leave the act itself? Or rather, what is the relationship between sex (the act), sexual orientation, and identity? It is not a question that Foucault overlooked.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. pp. 58-59.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 38.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 155.



In an ironic twist of events, Foucault seems to interpret sex as both an intrinsic part of sexuality<sup>37</sup> as well as a form of confession. He explains that “...[i]t is through sex—in fact, an imaginary point determined by the deployment of sexuality—that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his own intelligibility (seeing that it is both the hidden aspect and the generative principle of meaning), to the whole of his body (since it is a real and threatened part of it, while symbolically constituting the whole), to his identity (since it joins the force of a drive to the singularity of a history).”<sup>38</sup> Sex in this regard seems to function as a confessional of the sexual self—a part of one’s identity. With this Western approach (the mingling between pleasure and power<sup>39</sup>) to the trinity of sex (the act), sexuality<sup>40</sup> (the sexualized identity), and identity (the sexual and non-sexual Self), we are now able to investigate the implications and meaning on non-Western terms. Where does this analysis lead us in dealing with the case of South Korea?

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 155: “We must not make the mistake of thinking that sex is an autonomous agency which secondarily produces manifold effects of sexuality over the entire length of its surface of contact with power. On the contrary, sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in the deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures.”

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. cit. 5. p. 156.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter I (d), p 42.

For Foucault, the interpretation of truth and the existence of *ars erotica*, or erotic art, in non-Western societies<sup>41</sup> plays a major role in how such societies interpret sex, sexuality, and identity. “In the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience; pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself; it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, its reverberations in the body and the soul.” The emphasis here is that while Western societies have codified sexual acts as an essential part of the sexual self, such codification has not been the tradition in societies such as Korea’s. Arguing along different lines however, Y.G. Kim and S.J. Hahn (2006) find that as early as the Chosun Dynasty, “....[the] male homosexual came to be considered wicked by the Confucian upper-middle classes,” though admittedly such codification never stopped the practice of homosexual relations.<sup>42</sup> It is the contention of this research that this lack of codification of sexuality as in the case presented in Foucault’s study of the West in *The History of Sexuality*, is what makes any inquiry into sexual

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 57. In his work he specifically mentions “China, Japan, India, Rome, [and] the Arabo-Moslem societies.”

<sup>42</sup> See Kim, Young-Gwan, & Hahn, Sook-Ja. (2006). “Homosexuality in ancient and modern Korea.” *Culture Health, & Sexuality*, Jan-Feb. 8(1): 59-65.; quote. p. 62.

identity in South Korea both a question of sex and a question of identity—two important concepts whose meanings and relationship may differ starkly from those of other societies. It is also a question that bisexuality could provide the context for which to explore, especially in terms of sexual behavior and sexual identity particularly in South Korea. This endeavor could also help to add onto mainstream theories in the field.

In terms of bisexual orientation theory, as early as 1928, Margaret Mead had detailed her anthropological observations of bisexual behavior in non-Western cultures in *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Her study was one of the first, and for many years remained the only attempt at a scientific exploration into bisexual behavior. She was also one of the first to pioneer the deliniation between identity and behavior in her discussion of Samoan adolescent sexual behavior. This was one of the leading publications that eventually led to the understanding that sexual identity and sexual behavior are not inextricably connected.

Following her lead, several other anthropological works also probed the influence of same-sex behavior and identity in other cultures.<sup>43</sup> This

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<sup>43</sup> See Gilbert H. Herdt, "Semen Transactions in Sambia Culture," in *Culture and Human Sexuality: A Reader*, David N. Suggs & Andrew W. Miracle; "Breaking the Mirror: The Construction of Lesbianism and the Anthropological Discourse on Homosexuality," Evelyn Blackwood; "The Penis Pin: An Unsolved Problem in the Relations Between the Sexes in Borneo," Donald E. Brown.

deluge of anthropological research led to an understanding that (1) sexuality or the sexualization of the body is a matter of gender and sex, and (2) that sexuality and its various categorical distinctions are not universally applicable.

Gilbert Herdt (1981) also rejects Western notions of sexual identity when he explores the practices of the Sambia people in Papua New Guinea in which young boys ingest the semen of men as a coming of age process necessary for masculinization and manhood.<sup>44</sup> Yet, it was perhaps the ethnographic juncture, which tended to focus primarily on man's sexual behavior that led in part to Charlotte Wolff's sexual orientation research on women who identified as heterosexuals, but who were sexually active with other women.

In 1971, Charlotte Wolff produced the first self-reflexive empirical study of lesbianism in *Love between Women*.<sup>45</sup> For this study, she surveyed and interviewed participants who were married to men, but who also engaged in sexual relations with women. This seminal work led to her later *Bisexuality* which set out to better define bisexuality, despite its somewhat

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Toni Brennan & Peter Hegarty. (2012). "Charlotte Wolff's Contribution to Bisexual History and to (Sexuality) Theory and Research: A Reappraisal for Queer Times." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. Vol. 21:1, p. 144.

erroneous assertion that “...homosexuality has its roots in bisexuality.”<sup>46</sup>

She saw bisexuality as the point from which branches of other sexualities grew, most of which she attributed to the difficulties bisexuals face in articulating their sexual behaviors to others. In it, she argued that “...far more people are used to thinking of themselves as homo- than bisexuals because, in contrast to bisexuality, homosexuality is more easily defined.”<sup>47</sup> Most significant for our purposes, Wolff found bisexuality as a means of which to break free from heterosexual normativity and disrupt what she considered the “directional” conceptualization of sexuality, a disruption of the discourse on sexual identity and orientation that “...enshrines either an elision of bisexuality (not predicated on directionality/ orientation) or an oxymoron (“bisexual orientation”).”<sup>48</sup> It is with this idea of bisexual neutrality<sup>49</sup>, for lack of a better term, in which this research will attempt to better understand the intricate relationship between sexual identification and sexual behavior in South Korea.

On another front, the ethnographic focus on sexual behavior went from being devoted primarily to man-to-man sexual relations to the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 145.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 147. Taken from Wolff, *Bisexuality*, p. 66.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. cit. 1. p. 149.

<sup>49</sup> In *Bisexuality*, Wolff coined the term “homoemotionality” in order to replace the terms lesbian and homosexuality, both of which she found inappropriate to explain a behavior that was primarily based on feelings rather than on identity.

consideration of cross-gender sexual behavior studies of women in marriage. The 60s and 70s was a period of inquiry that focused on understanding the relationship between gender and sexual behavior. It was, however, not one without its dominant themes. One in particular was that of Fritz Klein who attempted to break the general discourse that marginalized bisexuals to “the spy...[who] moves psychosexually freely among men and among women....a dangerous person, not to be trusted, because his or her party loyalty, so to speak is nonexistent.”<sup>50</sup> His take on bisexuality goes beyond simply explaining the normalcy of sexual behavior as fundamentally connected to either hetero- or homosexual activity, but also argues that bisexuality is a confrontation in its own right because “...the heterosexual [male] is not free to identify beyond certain vague, ‘neuter’ acts, such as kissing or being fellated.”<sup>51</sup> According to Klein, meeting a bisexual male subjects the heterosexual to a conflict of self even more so than would that of a homosexual. This is primarily because “...if a homosexual male finds other males attractive, that fact has nothing to do with the heterosexual...but

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<sup>50</sup> Fritz Klein, MD. (1993) *The Bisexual Option*. American Institute of Bisexuality, Inc. p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

if a bisexual male finds both men and women attractive, that does have something to do with him in a way too close for comfort.”<sup>52</sup>

With the above ideas in mind, this research intends to open a more nuanced dialogue on sexuality and bisexuality in South Korea—one that attempts to take sexual identity beyond an interpretation of lifestyle alone (i.e. gay versus straight), and rather one that factors in behavior while considering the political or non-political forces that may force a person to elect a bisexual identity when his or her behavior is not socially seen as such. But, why and how bisexuality came to be seen as the middle ground between heterosexual and homosexual identities is essential to grasping any investigation into bisexuality in South Korea.

In the mid-1900s, Alfred Kinsey and Wardell Pomeroy, collaborating with several other authors published two books on human sexual behavior, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), the first of which would become known collectively as the *Kinsey Reports*.

The *Kinsey Reports* was the result of a large-scale quantitative investigation into the human experience, which became most welcomed because of its frequent investigation into sexual orientation and later by its

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

surprising statistical claims. The bulk of the data was obtained from the answers of white males to questions of frequency of orgasms in regards to (1) nocturnal emission, (2) masturbation, (3) heterosexual petting, (4) heterosexual intercourse (pre-marital, marital, extramarital, post-marital), (5) homosexual contact, and (6) contact with animals.<sup>53</sup> With more than 5,300 participating white males, the Report was one of the largest on sexual orientation of its day. And its influential magnitude in academia served as a powerful force in solidifying the continuum of hetero-homo normative ideas as well as creating the room for inquiry on where these extremes meet.

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<sup>53</sup> Wallin, Paul. 1949. "An Appraisal of Some Methodological Aspects of the Kinsey Report". *American Sociological Review*. 14:2 pp. 197-210.



The Kinsey Report used the following scale as a measure of male sexual orientation:

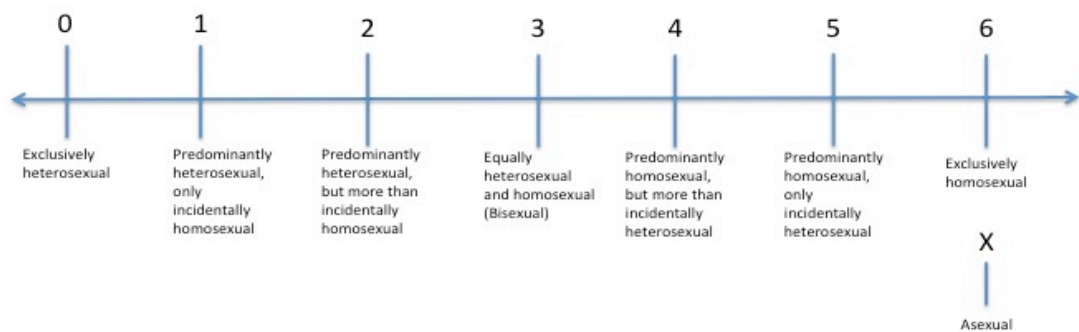


Figure: # The Male Sexual Orientation Scale.

Despite the problems inherent in the Report's sample pool (e.g a large number of the participants were in prison or working as prostitutes), it was one of the most eminent attempts at objectively connecting sexual behavior with sexual orientation using social scientific methodology. It failed, however, for three reasons. First, the scale is not objective at all;

“predominant” is itself relative. Kinsey’s subjects were forced to retroactively internalize their behaviors as either heterosexual or homosexual. Second, the scale assumes that sexuality has absolutes; the idea that a person can be exclusively homo or heterosexual based primarily on sexual attraction alone (excluding emotional preference, fantasies, personal identification and so on) is presumptuous and oversimplistic. And third, stretching even beyond the fallacy of the hetero-homonormative split, presents the conceptual impossibility of objectively estimating every “heterosexual petting” and “homosexual contact” to the point of being able to deduce results to an absolute divide, or “bisexual” as denoted in the scale.<sup>54</sup>

Moving far beyond mere notions of heterosexual petting and contact, and while abandoning the substantialist theory of gender, the view that gender norms operate in ways that regulate and police the acceptable and the licit must not be overlooked. Judith Butler in “Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity” presents a new idea, namely that gender is

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<sup>54</sup> This is not to say that Kinsey himself did not realize the problems inherent in this scale. Thus in his work, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) he wrote, “Males do not represent two discrete populations, heterosexual and homosexual. The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats... The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects.” So in many ways the scale he designed did not establish the world-wide perspective he intended to share. He accepted that people could both change their sexual identity as well as represent something other than exclusive homosexual or heterosexual. However, the scale itself created an impression that this two extremes were the most significant in understanding and analyzing sexual identities.

an expression of what one does, not as an expression of what one is.<sup>55</sup> In so doing, she shifts the spatial to the temporal, completely eliminating the metaphorical space and instead substitutes them with substantive identities that replace generalized notions of "... 'lesbians' and 'gay men' [that] have been traditionally designated as impossible identities, errors of classification, unnatural disasters within juridico-medical discourses, or, what perhaps amounts to the same, the very paradigm of what calls to be classified, regulated, and controlled."<sup>56</sup> She talks much of the "...professionalization of gayness [that] requires a certain performance and production of a 'self' which is the *constituted effect* of a discourse that nevertheless claims to 'represent' that self as a prior truth."<sup>57</sup> It is exactly this performativity that has, in my opinion, opened a queer blackhole through which gay performance has sapped much from the possibility of queer diversity in places like South Korea.

It is on the basis of the lack of *bisexual* performativity or the possibility of seeing this identity as a gender, coupled with the intense preoccupation with gayness or homosexual performativity, and the

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<sup>55</sup> See Butler, Judith. 1990. "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity." (Routledge).

<sup>56</sup> Butler, Judith. 1993. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" in Henry Abelove et. al. *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. (Routledge). p.309.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 310.

somewhat regretful neglect of the reflective self and agency (beyond identity politics) of the sexualized person in South Korea that this research shall attempt to both expose and better understand.

## **2. Terminology**

### **a. Queer/ Queer Identity/ Queer Identities**

The term Queer is the umbrella term most accepted for all sexual and gender/ gendered minorities that do not fit within either the heteronormative or the gender-binary (hetero-homosexual) paradigms, though homosexuals are also included. The term, however, is not without controversy since the word “queer” was employed as an anti-gay epithet in the 1990s. In its place, many fronts have chosen to employ the acronym: LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender). Such attempts at political correctness have led to a proliferation of added letterings: LGBTI (to include Intersex<sup>58</sup>), LGBTQ (the Q for all exceptions), and even LGBTIH (the H for Hijra to include an Indian minority). And even more recently in South Korea, some have pushed for an LGBTAIQ rendering in which ‘A’ represents Asexual and ‘Q’, “Questioner,” to mean a person who has yet to decide.<sup>59</sup> Clearly, such identity distinctions set the stage for sub-level discrimination within and between sexual minorities. For this reason, I will reclaim the term

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<sup>58</sup> A variation in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, and/ or genitals that do not allow an individual to be distinctly identified as male or female.

<sup>59</sup> Hong, Haeyoung. Seoul National University Journal. 2013 June 6. “Sexual Minorities Within Us” <성소수자는 우리 안에 있습니다>.

Queer (as was done in the early 2000s) as the all-inclusive label for sexual minorities.

## **b. Bisexual and Bisexuality**

The prescriptive meaning of bisexuality and its sexual identity is the basis of this research and the meaning in South Korea should become clear later. However, in terms of general interpretations of male bisexuality as a sexual identity, it has often been placed in relation to gendered expressions of masculinity. As such, bisexuality has been interpreted as a mutually exclusive identity seen in the following patterns or some combination of them:

- a. Bisexuals are on the margins of both gay and straight.<sup>60</sup>
- b. Bisexuality marks the boundary between gay and straight.
- c. Bisexuals move between gay and straight.
- d. Bisexuals breach gay and straight.
- e. Bisexual space encircles gay and straight.

However, in lieu of the definition of sexuality incorporated by this research, it is my contention that sexual orientation is not limited to whom one is sexual with and how one self-identifies. For one, sexuality refers to both the biological aspects of sexual functioning as well as to such aspects

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<sup>60</sup> Gay & Straight refer to gendered masculinities that may or may not denote sexual preference regarding orientation.

as sexual orientation, gender role, intimacy, sensuality, and sexual self-concept.<sup>61</sup> In this way, sexuality goes beyond mere sexual essentialism's notions of reproduction, genital function, and conventional sexual intercourse and includes many interrelated components (e.g. expressions of emotion and identity issues). Therefore, a person's desire and behavior, as well as elements of fantasy, emotional, and social preference should envelope the concept of sexual orientation, which plays a strong role in understanding bisexuality.

It is also the view of this research that there is a potential difficulty in ascertaining who the potential targets of discrimination and mistreatment are due to inconsistent definitions of male sexual orientation and categorizations in South Korea. Such inconsistencies are in part caused by a general disinclination to self-identify as bisexual on the part of those who call themselves gay or heterosexual but engage in non-plutonic, emotionally amorous and otherwise engage in sexual acts with other men.

Thus, rather than taking the traditional dichotomous route of presenting the complexity of sexualities using the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid, which considers sexual attraction, sexual behavior, sexual fantasies, emotional preference, social preference, lifestyle preference, and self identification

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<sup>61</sup> Byer, C.O. & Shainberg, L.W. (1994) *Dimensions of Human Sexuality*, Madison: WCB Brown & Benchmark.

along a continuum of heterosexual-homosexual, this research will approach bisexuality from the view that sexual self-identification is a cultural construct that does not necessarily denote one's claimed sexual identity—a social & biological construct.

Perhaps an analogy will best serve to explain this notion. If one reduces sexual tastes (to include all of Klein's variable factors) along a continuum of two socially constructed opposites, say sweet and sour, while admitting that we are all predisposed in terms of desire, both biologically and environmentally, then we could claim that the potential for every person to identify as bisexual is a human universal—for the most part, we do all have taste buds. Yet, it would be a fallacy to assume that such a biological potentiality evinces itself by possibility alone. With this somewhat exaggerated analogy in mind, it is hard for many to deconstruct the dichotomy and see sweet & sour as a blend that could be better suited to those who are able to enjoy them together—a blend that in itself could be seen as a taste of its own and not necessarily distinguishable by the mere components that constitute it. This is, however, not to say that a bisexual need enjoy both at a time. It simply means that there is a possibility for similar attractions and sexual needs from both at any particular time. The inability to grasp such a concept is perhaps the result of both homosexuals



and heterosexuals who “...have largely taken for granted the model offered by heterosexual marriage,”<sup>62</sup> and the emphasis on the monogamous ideal—an issue that bisexuals must immediately confront.

The definition that this research would like to take on for bisexuality would be one that includes Klein’s variables mentioned above with a loose appropriation of the sexual identity that goes beyond the binary of heterosexual activities. Rather it seeks to define bisexuality first as a matter of behavior alone then as an internalized concept that includes social constraints and social expectations that may differ culturally in South Korea—especially since there is no literature on bisexuality in the country and arguably few who self identify as bisexuals.

### **c. Homosexuality/ Homosexual**

Though this research does not intend to delve into the problems of understanding or conceptualizing homosexuality in the South Korean context (a somewhat futile effort), it will nonetheless employ this term to mean men who self identify as sexually attracted to other men. In the case of South Korea, as mentioned above, the most common term for

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<sup>62</sup> Altman, D. (1982) *The homosexualization of America, the Americanization of the homosexual*. New York: St. Martin’s Press. p. 185.

homosexuality, *dongseongaeja* (同性愛者) or same sex lover, literally “...refers solely to erotic desire existing between members of the same sex...[and] in the strict sense of the term, distinct from matters of identity.”<sup>63</sup> For this reason, some have argued for the use of the term *dongseongyeonae* (同性戀愛), literally “same sex love relationship,” but it has been less accepted due to its focus on one’s amorous nature in heterosexual normative terms while belittling the importance of sexual behavior and intimacy in homosexual terms. For the most part, the South Korean gay community has rejected this alternative in light of its heterosexual connotation and the interpretive belittlement of man-to-man sex that may exclude heterosexual concepts of love—dismissing such behavior as the marks of fleeting sexual or amorous flings, and not worthy of the distinction as a legitimate sexual identity. For this reason, I used the Korean word *dongseongaeja* during interviews and in Korean written texts. As of late two alternatives, the *gei* phonetic rendering of the English term gay and the term *yiban* (二般；異般), as a counterpart to the word *ilban* (一般) literally meaning “common,” or “general” have also been used in reference to men who identify as people who have sex with other men. Though the former term has taken root, the general adoption of the latter in the 1990s will be explained in Chapter III.

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<sup>63</sup> Seo Dong-jin “Mapping the Vicissitudes of Homosexual Identities in South Korea,” *Journal of Homosexuality*. p. 70.

#### **d. Sexuality & Sexual Orientation**

As explained above, sexuality refers to both the biological aspects of sexual functioning as well as to such aspects as sexual orientation, gender role, intimacy, sensuality, and the sexual concept of self.<sup>64</sup> In this way, sexuality goes beyond mere notions of sexual essentialism that focuses on reproduction, genital function, and sexual intercourse; it also includes many interrelated components (e.g. expressions of emotion and identity issues). However, in this research the term sexual orientation refers to whether a respondent chooses to describe his sexual acts in line with notions of passive/ active, penetrated/ penetrator, masculine/ feminine, butch/ femme, or other sexual paradigms of power dominance or relative submissiveness. Relating sexual orientation to sexuality is not an essential point of this research in framing how bisexuals internalize their sexual identity in South Korea, however it plays a strong role in how South Koreans interpret this sexual identity. Yet, as will be explained later the notions of sexual orientation play only minor roles in understanding both notions of sex as a whole as well as concepts of private versus public, tradition versus

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<sup>64</sup> Byer, C.O. & Shainberg, L.W. (1994) *Dimensions of Human Sexuality*, Madison: WCB Brown & Benchmark.

modernity, and sexual acts that are not considered as constitutive of factors leading to sexual identity in South Korea.

### **3. Research Methodology**

My intentions should be clear from the outset. First, bisexuality exists, though not necessarily in any specific universal, non-static, or ubiquitous form. In addition, though the general tendency is to generalize bisexuality as the center ground, equidistance between two bipolar relationships in which the bisexual is attracted to both males and females, the term itself is much more complex. This will be covered more in depth in Chapter III.

Second, by focusing on South Korea, I intend to argue that sexual identities are not universal and rather the results of a process of mitigation that can be analyzed in a social and cultural context. This is nothing new. However, probing beyond concepts of identity and venturing into the complexity of meaning, especially related to sex, is yet uncharted territory in South Korea. It is my belief that the lack of dialogue about sex in general and bisexuality in particular makes the country a perfect place for investigating bisexuality and can greatly add to the discursive production of the sexual self, not only in Korea, but also in terms of the relationship between sexual identity and sex-related discourse in gender studies. In a place in which sexual acts are only now developing the linguistic necessities

for becoming self-developed norms,<sup>65</sup> South Korea is also arguably the bedrock from which to study the epistemological and ontological divides between sex, sexuality, and sexual identity.

Third, while specifically focusing on South Korea, I will delve into a critical discussion of bisexuality as an identity, but this discussion will not attempt to draw a historiographical linear progression of the identity as fundamentally a consequence of evolution along the path of political events or global trends, which often serve as reasoning for feminist and gay writings in the country. My reasoning is that there is no such evolution, and also that bisexuality as an entity in Korea is neither a sexual object choice, a gendered subject, nor a pre-disposed identity that can be explained away with ‘I was born that way’.

Fourth, my use of interviews should also make clear that I intend to argue that conscious and unconscious behavior do not necessarily constitute the sexual identities and genders that people readily admit. An analytical linkage between cultural values & self in relation to sex in part constitutes the renegotiation process of identity that is catalyzed and mitigated by Other. The interviews conducted serve as a means of “othering” that

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<sup>65</sup>See Chingusai. 2011. *Gay Culture Holic*. pp. 242-267. This manual on Gay Culture provides a list of select terminologies that are used almost exclusively by the *ehban* community.

facilitates the process of creating meaning that had either been obscure, dormant, or entirely unknown to the subject. This othering furthers the reflexivity of renegotiating self by the subject, additionally providing confidence in that their answers are to a readily identifiable outsider, namely me, a non-Korean. However, in this case, the subject is forced either to mitigate between cultural values and notions of sexual norms or to predicate his understanding of self on the reflexive binary theme of Korean versus non-Korean expectations.

Fifth, I would like to reiterate Blumstein and Schwartz's 1997 warning of viewing any data on sexual minorities--regardless of how large the sample pool--in terms of random sampling. For despite, how heterogeneous or diverse the respondents, "...when dealing with underground populations or sexual minorities...they are certainly not representative of anything but themselves."<sup>66</sup> It is thus my intention to present data, similar to Blumstein and Schwartz's work, that only shows patterns that occur with enough regularity to warrant interpretation. The overall goal is two-fold: to find patterns in the environmental factors giving way to bisexual behavior as well as to scope the meaning, or lack thereof, of bisexuality as an identity in South Korea.

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<sup>66</sup> Quoting Bell 1974 and Weinberg 1970 in their combined work "Bisexuality: Some Social Psychological Issues (1977)" in Merl Storr's *Bisexuality: a critical reader*. p. 64.

Lastly, this study is intended to be reflexive for those who were interviewed. While a person's views of sexuality are often associated with abstract notions of sex and pleasure<sup>67</sup>, interviews stimulate concrete constructions people place on their own feelings and experiences, which both provide contextual substance for how they internalize their feelings and actions, while also providing for the cultural logic of how & why they employ certain linguistic means of doing so. This research attempts to take such accounts verbatim in hope of finding patterned responses that help to understand in what ways a newly budding sexual identity is forming in the country.

#### *Interview Methodology*

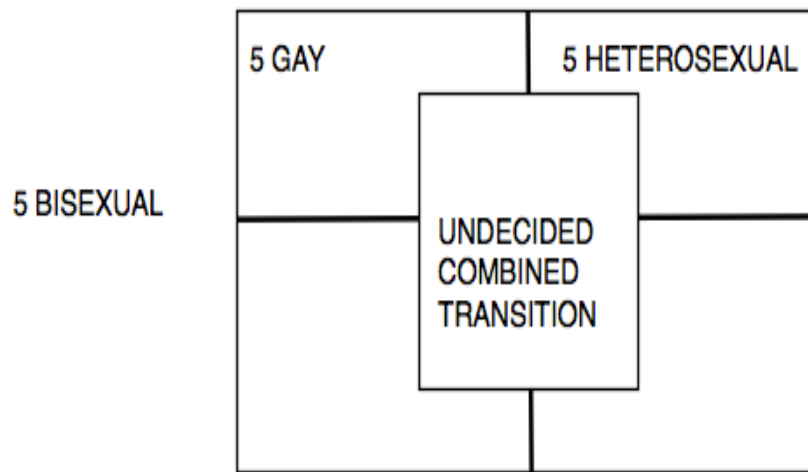
Though this research agrees with Blumstein & Schwartz's 1997 warning that interviews with sexual minorities cannot serve as a sample pool of society, it will attempt to find patterns in responses of sexuality-based groups living in Korea. On this basis, it used 3 groups of 5 volunteers who are self-identified gay/ homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual males (while respecting that some were undecided, combined, or still in transition). It also used these 15 participants to understand the meaning and

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<sup>67</sup> In Foucault's words "...the notion of desire, or of the desiring subject, constituted if not a theory, then at least a generally accepted theoretical theme." (The History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure, vol. 2. (1985)). p. 4.



significance of bisexuality as well as a way of analyzing pre-self-identification particularly of those who were undecided, combined, or still in transition.



*Selection & Interview Process:*

All bisexuals and homosexuals were voluntary participants who contacted me through a predominately homosexual-based SNS smart device application in which I advertise as a researcher interested in sexual behavior. Once contacted, I informed the prospective participants that I am conducting a study of sexual identity and ask if they would like to meet to have a 30 to 60-min interview conducted in daytime and at a local café or a café of their

choice. I offered no monetary or other compensation for their participation in the interview aside from an open mind and a willing ear. The heterosexuals were contacted via a similar SNS dating application that allows for members to select both their sexual identity (gay, bisexual, heterosexual) as well as to filter the possible respondents based on sexual identity. The same advertisement was used for both SNS dating applications, with the exception of the latter application set at heterosexual for the researcher's account.<sup>68</sup>

The participants also knew that a person of non-Korean ethnicity would conduct the interview.<sup>69</sup> This presented both a benefit and possibly skewed data results. On the one hand, speaking to a readily identifiable outsider allowed the subjects the freedom to break free from the taboos and talk candidly about their sexual experiences and the meaning of sexuality. On the other hand, perception of difference can also skew data toward answers that serve merely as a pretext for attempting to promote one's view of nation ahead of one's sexuality, or for proving one's more radical dissidence away from social norms. The questions asked during the interview were created in such a way as to pick up whether the interviewee

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<sup>68</sup> The homosexual-based SNS advertises itself as a gay-social network application and does not allow its members the option of selecting a sexual identity.

<sup>69</sup> The researcher's account includes a picture of a 24-year old African-American.

presents elements that are either: contradictory, partial, or fragmented. The following is a compiled analysis of the interview pool.

ID	AGE	EDU	MIL	REL	FAM	SEX ID	1 <sup>ST</sup> EXP	FEM REL	MAL REL	UNPROT	SNS #	ON	MIL P	REC
B1	24	C(3)	X	X	1 B(26) M+F: A:M	B/G	M:F 15: 14	O (1); 1Y	O (2); ?	O	MA (?)	4	N/A	X
B2	26	C(GRAD)	X	O (BUD)	1 B(24) M+F: A:M	B/H	M:F 16: 16	O (2); 1Y; 8MO	O (1); 1Y	O	12	17 (?)	X	O
B3	21	C(2)	X	O (CAT)	2 S(33;35) M+F: A:M	B	M:M 13:?	O (2); 2Y; 4MO	O (MA); ?	X	MA (?)	MA (?)	N/A	O
B4	23	H(GRAD)	O	X	2 B (18; 25) M: A:S	B/H	M:F 13:14	O (3); 1 Y; ?	X	O	MA(?)	MA(?)	X	X
B5	21	C(1)	X	O (BUD)	N/A M+F: A:M	B	M:M 15: 18	X	X	X	MA (?)	8	N/A	O
G1	24	C(4)	X	X	1 B(29) M+F: A:M	G	M:M 17: ?	X	X	X	5 (?)	2	N/A	O
G2	20	C(1)	X	O (CAT)	1 S (26) M+F: A:M	G	M:M X	O (1); 6 MO	O (3); 3MO	X	MA (?)	3	N/A	X
G3	25	C(4)	O	O (CAT)	1 S (23) M+F: A:M	G	M:M 17:19	O(MA); ?	X	O	?	MA(?)	X	O
G4	22	C(3)	X	X	N/A M+F: A:M	G	M:M 12: 15	X	X	X	?	X	N/A	O
G5	23	C(2)	X	O (CHR)	1 B(17) M+F: A:M	G	M:M 9:10	O(1); 1Y	O(2); 3MO; 1Y	X	MA(?)	MA(?)	N/A	X
H1	23	C(3)	X	X	1 B(18) M+F: A:M	H	M:F 17:16	O(1); 1Y	X	X	5 (?)	3	X	O
H2	25	C(4)	X	X	N/A M+F: A:M	H	M:F 19:19	O(1); 2Y	X	O	X	3	N/A	O
H3	27	C(GRAD)	O	X	N/A M+F: A:M	H	M:F 20:?	O(MA); ?	X	O	6	MA (?)	X	O
H4	24	C(3)	O	?	1 B(17) M+F: A:M	H	M:F 20	O (1); 1 MO	X	X	X	1	X	O
H5	20	C(1)	X	O (CHR)	2 S(33;35) M+F: A:M	H	M:F 20	X	X	X	X	1	X	O

TABLE 1: Interview Demographics and Basic Responses

-EDU=Education (C=College; H=High School)  
-MIL=Military Service (O=Served; X=Not Served)  
-REL=Religion (O=yes; X=none; BUD=Buddhist; CAT=Catholic; CHR=Christian)  
-FAM:=Family Structure (S=Sister; B=Brother; M-F=Mother & Father; A=Live Together=M=Parents are Married; S=Parent is Single)  
-SEX ID=Sexual Identification (B=Bisexual; G=Homosexual; H=Heterosexual)  
-1<sup>st</sup> EXP= First Experience (M= Male; F=Female)  
-FEM REL= Relationship with a Female (O=yes; X=no; Y=year; MO=Month)  
-MAL REL= Relationship with a Male  
-UNPROT= Unprotected Sex  
-SNS #= How many times one has met someone using online or smart technology applications?  
-ON= One-night Stands  
-MIL P: Military Punishment for Sex-Related Behavior  
-MA: Multiple Accounts  
-REC: Allowed for voice recording

### Issues of Interview Methodology Explained:

Why choose a sexual orientation SNS application instead of a gay community organization when interviewing homosexuals?

For one, this research is geared towards understanding sexual behavior not as a consequence to or of internalized sexual identity, but rather as a function of sexual desires and behaviors that possibly constitute that identity. It is my view that a gay-oriented community would present a politically biased interpretation of their sexual behavior as a consequence or extension of their identity. However, this admittedly presents a problem. For one, many members of such a SNS application often sign up with the intent of having a sexual encounter and the results could be distorted toward an interpretation of an enclave suffering from satyriasis (hypersexuality) or sexual addiction within South Korean society.

An additional problem is that the participants were limited to those who have access to smart device technology. This could skew the results by having marginalized those who perhaps represent social or economic classes that do not have access to such technologies.

### Interview Analytical Methodology

This research utilized patterned responses of 1-on-1 interviews with particular interest in both reflexive understanding of bisexuality from self-identified heterosexuals, homosexuals, and bisexuals.

#### **4. Thesis Structure**

This thesis is broken down into three additional chapters. Chapter III focuses particularly on the social structures that are necessary to understand the boundaries and limitations of sexuality and sexual orientation in South Korea. In particular, it addresses male sexual relations and the social structures that are particular to 20-somethings, the meaning of sex and sexual orientation identity, sexual fetishes, and bisexual curiosity. In Chapter IV, an understanding of how queer sexual discrimination is reproduced through South Korea's social dynamic factors that were introduced in the introduction, namely those of academic scholarship, politics, media, and law is established. It ends with an analysis of how newly developing sexual orientations are entering into the country with a particular focus on trans-gender/ trans-sexual identities and bisexuality. Finally, Chapter V delves into bisexual identity production and South Korean cultural particularity as well as the influence of the interview findings on Korea's queer discourse, and in particular on how sexual behavior impacts sexual identity in the country.

### **III. Sexual Identity & South Korea's Socio-Cultural Factors**

#### **1. Development of Queer Discourse and Related Policies in South Korea**

Though eroticism can be found in Korean tradition art and literature, anything remotely similar to homosexual or bisexual behavior are few and far between. Gahyun Youn (1996) provides the earliest known account of anything similar to Western concepts of unorthodox sexuality that date back to April 780 when Hyekong (765-580), the 36th king of the Shilla Dynasty was killed by his subordinates because they could not accept his femininity.<sup>70</sup> A more direct example of possible same-sex eroticism dates back to Myojung (785-798), a Buddhist famous for his beauty and rumored to have been sought after by several male aristocrats and even by the Emperor of the Tang Dynasty. But the most revealing of non-heterosexual behavior in Korea's history was that of Gongmin (1330-1374) whose reign began in 1352. His tendency for pederasty after the death of his wife led him to establishing an apprentice association that is well documented in historical texts. The tales of the king's same-sex tendencies were also depicted in a controversial 2008 motion picture, *A Frozen Flower* (Ssanghwaajeum).

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<sup>70</sup> Youn, Gahyun. 1996. "Do Human Rights Exist for Korean Gay Men and Lesbians?" Presented at the 104th Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Aug. 9-13.

Though there are no documented sources of specific same-sex sexual acts or historical writings that acknowledge the existence of a non-heterosexual identity,<sup>71</sup> sex between men is argued to have occurred. Gahyun Youn asserts that “...in the tradition of Korean folklore, there are many [oral] stories about anal intercourse between men.”<sup>72</sup> In addition, Young-gwan Kim et. al. (2006) presents a prominent case of same-sex sexual relations that led to seemingly identity altering effects within the community of *hwarang* monks who were even said to have practiced transvestitism.<sup>73</sup> Yet, few works can be found in pre-modern Korea that presents direct evidence of non-heterosexual relations tied specifically to identity.

It was not until many centuries later that the latent discourse on non-heterosexual sexual identities came to the academic foreground in the country. Though many attribute this unveiling of hidden sexual enclaves to the *coming outs* of two celebrities in the country,<sup>74</sup> the reality is that the

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<sup>71</sup> Here I mean even in terms of insinuation. “The term [sexuality] itself did not appear until the beginning of the nineteenth century.” Foucault. *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 2. p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> Kim, Young-gwan, & Hahn, Sook-Ja. 2006. “Homosexuality in ancient and modern Korea.” *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, January-February 2006; 8(1): 59-65.

<sup>74</sup> In 2000, Hong Seok-cheon a male model and actor *came out / outed* as gay in 2000 on national television, in which case he was summarily fired. And in 2002 pop singer, model and actress Lee Kyung-eun, a.k.a. Harisu became the second person in South Korea to



South Korea government and media have often followed US media and contemporary trends when it comes to addressing non-heterosexual issues. As such, no definitive linear progression for addressing male sexual orientation in South Korea exists.<sup>75</sup> Instead, the foci on sexual identity have come (and often dissipated just as quickly) in short scholastic & media-driven bursts that are highly dependent on social structure and issue-specificity. These issues, dating particularly from the 1990s, are (1) AIDS, (2) democratization, human rights, discrimination, & military conscription (3) sex crimes, and (4) marriages of convenience. It is also my view that each of these areas has consequently led to the blurring of sexual identities by (sometimes inconsistent & inappropriately) coupling sexual orientation with issue specificity.

#### -(1) AIDS

The fear of AIDs and the view that it was a disease spread by same-sex relationships were realities in the 1980s. While hosting the 1988

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legally change gender. Ironically, both cases focused social attention on male sexual identity though the latter seems more related to gender and sexual orientation.

<sup>75</sup> Despite attempts at using historico-linguistic approaches to deduce an exact date of when the word “homosexual” appeared in the Korean language, those attempts seem fruitless when one considers the Korean language. I take the view of Seo Dong-Jin (2008) in his finding that the most extensively used Korean term, both present and past, 동성애자 (*tongseongaeja*) or same sex lover, literally “...refers solely to erotic desire existing between members of the same sex...[and] in the strict sense of the term, distinct from matters of identity.” From Seo Dong-Jin’s “Mapping the Vicissitudes of Homosexual Identities in South Korea,” in *Journal of Homosexuality*. p. 70.

Olympics, the fast growing epidemic overseas presented South Korea with a dilemma, namely how to address it. The country chose to deal with it as a national security issue rather than as an individual health-related one that is also important domestically. This resulted in a “...dichotomy between foreign dangers and the Korean self [which] became manifest in the HIV/AIDS prevention discourse.”<sup>76</sup>

The result was clearly an ill-conceived preventive measure because statistics showed that by 1993 infection via contact with nationals (44.7%) had rapidly surpassed that of foreigners (43.3%) in the country.<sup>77</sup> These startling statistics led to blaming the rapid increase in infection on what were deemed a virulent domestic homosexual community and the product of the prostitution industry. The media reported that the illness was one “...constituted largely of cases of homosexuals contracting AIDS from foreign partners and infection from prostitutes.”<sup>78</sup> In addition, it was only two months later that the government launched a full-scale attack on its homosexual minorities. In 1990, the Korea Institute for Health and Social

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<sup>76</sup> Cheng, Sealing. 2005. “Popularizing purity: Gender, sexuality and nationalism in HIV/AIDS prevention for South Korean youths.” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*. Vol. 46. No. 1. April 2005. 7-20.

<sup>77</sup> 동아일보 1994. 07. 31 “에이즈, 内国人 (내국인) 접촉, 감염 45%로 늘었다.” (Dong-Ah Ilbo: 1994. July, 3. In English, “AIDS Contracted with Korean Citizens, Infection Rises 45%.)

<sup>78</sup> Cheng, *ibid.* p. 9. Quoting Seoul Shinmun 1 April 1990, which reported the first confirmed case of infection from a prostitute on 31 March 1990.

Affairs released a report of 269 male homosexuals and warned that homosexuality could lead to a sharp rise in the number of AIDS patients.<sup>79</sup> This move to blame disadvantaged women and a growing sexual minority did not stop at the governmental level. NGOs also joined in, leading to a powerful purity campaign that demonized sexual deviance of all natures.

The Korean Anti-AIDS Federation (KAAFS), which focused primarily on educating and assisting youth in the country, set out on an education-driven campaign in 1995 to morally purify middle and high school students.<sup>80</sup> As the only such organizations in the country at the time, it benefited from both a media presence as well as a large backing in terms of social contributions. However, besides promoting sex within familial ideals, reproductive responsibilities, moral obligations, and nationalistic commitment, the organization also deemed sex and even expressions of sexuality as deviant behavior that would invariably lead to the possibility of contracting HIV/ AIDS. As can be imagined, a general atmosphere of self-inflicted sexual repression in the minds of youth resulted—replaced by a culture in which talk of sex or eroticism was made foreign, intensely connected to impure nationalist ideals, and dangerously close to life-threatening infection.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p. 18. citation 12.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. cit. 6. pp. 11-12

-(2) Democratization, Human Rights, Discrimination, & Military  
Conscription

Korea is the only divided nation in the world, and its southern half has one of the longest mandatory conscription services (from 21 to 36 months commiserate on service time) in which every healthy male must join. All men from ages 21 to 30 must perform active military service<sup>81</sup>, unless they fall under the provisions of Articles 26-43 of the Military Service Act and are defined as those who “...have physical or mental deficiencies, special family circumstances, or skill in a special or unusual profession.”<sup>82</sup> According to 2011 South Korean Military Manpower Administration military statistics, 74.3% of all new cadets were between the ages of 20 and 22.<sup>83</sup> And of all the new candidates, 79.8% had matriculated into college.<sup>84</sup> The combination of age and mandatory conscription, not to mention the stress of college life, make for an explosive sexual mix. In addition, media attention to the global democratic trends of the late-20th century, such as

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<sup>81</sup> Military Service Act [MSA], 31 Dec. 1993, 6 Statutes of the Republic of Korea 701.

<sup>82</sup> Choi, C. 2006. “Military Conscription and Human Rights in the Republic of Korea: The Right of Conscientious Objection.” *Temple International & Comparative Law Journal*. Issue 1 (20). p. 133.

<sup>83</sup> The exact records were as follows: 19 y.o. (32,976 million); 20-22 y.o. (112,029 million); 23 y.o. & above (5,822 million). 병무청. South Korean Military Manpower Administration 2011 Statistical White Paper. p. 163.

[http://www.mma.go.kr/kor/s\\_info/release10/release0902/\\_\\_\\_icsFiles/afieldfile/2012/07/24/rKSubARQtMdW.pdf](http://www.mma.go.kr/kor/s_info/release10/release0902/___icsFiles/afieldfile/2012/07/24/rKSubARQtMdW.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p. 164.

sexual orientations and identities, has led to several scholarly works that focus on heterosexual behavior, homosexual sexual identity, and the influences of military enlistment.

Yeong Jin Choi et. al. (2000), in studying the effects of military service on masturbation habits of young cadets (N=1,212), found that there was a high correlation between military service and both the incidents of masturbation (98.1%) and coitus with prostitutes (67.7%) in South Korea—substantially higher than the 60-85% for other countries. They concluded that most of their subjects had “...not learned about sexuality from formal education offered in schools or from parents.”<sup>85</sup> They also found that 1.07% of their sample pool were engaged in homosexual activities. However, there is no further analysis of the relatively large percentage of homosexual activity taking place in an all-male military where same-sex relations are strictly forbidden. But the report does raise the issue that perhaps sexual education and the lack of sexual awareness has led some to see the military as a place for experimentation.

In another case, Insook Kwon of the Korea Institute at Harvard University (2010) speaking specifically in regard to feminists’ general lack

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<sup>85</sup> Yeong Jin Choi, et. al. 2000. “Masturbation and Its Relationship to Sexual Activities of Young Males in Korean Military Service.” *Yonsei Medical Journal*. Vol. 41, No. 2. pp. 205-208.

of attention toward male conscription<sup>86</sup>, argues that culture has led to “...a triad of untouchable assumptions.”<sup>87</sup> Namely, she posits that women believe conscription is a man’s concern, that Confucianism combined with industrialization is explanation enough of gender oppression, and that South Korea’s conscription is “a crucial norm for constructing ‘normal,’ ‘adult’ masculinity.”<sup>88</sup> Yet, culturally constructed presumptions in South Korea are so prevalent that often there is general disregard for the complexity of masculinity itself— a matter that is generally regarded as universally equivalent. It is this disregard that I argue has moved avoiding the issue of male queer identities and sexual orientations to ignoring them altogether in feminist and gay studies in the country.

There have been a marked rise in studies related to homosexuals and especially in response to military and human rights, however they are nearly all premised within minority/ majority, gender equality, sexual violence, and ‘gay liberation’ paradigms without being fully engaged in determining the meaning of male sexual identity and sexual orientation of those homosexuals in South Korea. The truth of the matter is that while feminism

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<sup>86</sup> Interesting to note that the author appears to assume that all feminist in South Korea are also women.

<sup>87</sup> Kwon, Insook. 2010. “A Feminist Exploration of Military Conscription: The Gendering of the Connections Between Nationalism, Militarism and Citizenship in South Korea.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. p. 27.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.

and gender studies in South Korea have surged, queer studies have not. This is a point that Insook Kwon reaffirms in her “An Analysis of Military Sexuality: A Focus on Sexual Desire, Masculinity, Gay and the Like.”<sup>89</sup> Yet, she does so in the feminist tradition of focusing merely on social externalities such as power, desire, and sexual liberation in the form of military “entertainment,” a formula that simply does not work as well for men as it does for women (even with the semantic adjustment). This is primarily because “...most gay male conduct, all casual sex, promiscuity, and lesbian behavior that does involve roles or kink or non-monogamy are also censured,”<sup>90</sup> which is not the case for non-gay men in the military who often visit brothels in groups and even knowingly masturbate in proximity to one another. An attempt to stockpile sexual expressions between gays with that of heterosexuals within the paradigm of military conscription just does not work.

Additionally, issues related to avoiding the draft through conscientious objection<sup>91</sup> have led to many articles and essays on human

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<sup>89</sup> Kwon, Insook. 2009. “An Analysis of Military Sexuality: A Focus on Sexual Desire, Masculinity, Gay and the Like.” *Korea’s Economy and Society*. (권인숙. 2009. “군대 섹슈얼리티 분석: 성욕, 남성성, 동성애 등을 중심으로” *경제와 사회*.)

<sup>90</sup> Rubin, Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality. p. 165.

<sup>91</sup> See Choi, C. 2006. “Military Conscription and Human Rights in the Republic of Korea: The Right of Conscientious Objection.” *Temple International & Comparative Law Journal*. Issue 1 (20).

rights and the fight against male sexual oppression.<sup>92</sup> Suicide cases within the military, such as the recent case of a 24-year-old army officer who, after having been ignored by his superiors, hung himself from worries of his gay identity,<sup>93</sup> have further fueled the gay community's outrage as well as led to a general awareness of the need to address male sexual identity and orientation issues more directly.

Regardless of the headway that has been made in considering gays in the military, no research has been done with consideration that these "gays" could be bisexuals. Clearly, without such consideration the impact of the findings is in question. For example, legislation that claims to allow gays a specialized choice in how or whether they enlist in the military would invariably lead to problematic outcomes for the sheer reason that what constitutes "gay" in the South Korean gay community may not simply come down to questions of sexual essentialism or of where one puts his penis.

### -(3) Sex Crimes

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<sup>92</sup> This first case in which 3 people were excused based on this law took place in May of 2004 and only on religious grounds. The Chosun Ilbo, 22 May 2004. <양심적 병역거부 첫 무죄> Front page.

<sup>93</sup> The Chosun Ilbo. 2013 Jan. 17. "Suicide of Worried Homosexual Military Private...Shocking Repeatedly Ignored Appeals by Military." <동성애 고민하던 육군 일병 자살...軍,수차례 고민 호소 무시 논란>  
[http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2013/01/16/2013011602745.html](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/01/16/2013011602745.html)



Another area in which media has led to attention on male sexual identity and perhaps even in regard to sexual orientation is sex-related crimes and violence in South Korea. For reasons explained above, sex crimes such as prostitution and rape have posed serious problems in South Korea and have led to a superabundance of works attempting to address, understand, and solve these problems. There is a genuine concern to understand male sexual behavior and male sexual thinking, but not necessarily on how they connect to their identities.

Gwan Kim Hyun Young et. al. (2011) compiled a comprehensive survey of essays that focus particularly on the concept of male sexuality in Korea. Yet, interestingly enough not one article addresses masculinity in gay men (though Han Chae Yoon's "Lesbian's Masculinity: Gendered Coexistence, Reversal, Battle, Conflict"<sup>94</sup> provides an interesting U.S.-driven approach to explaining the lesbian masculinity or what she affectionately labels "the butch"). The closest consideration of a male queer identity and masculinity would be Young Jeong Na's "From the Boundaries of Male/ Unmale: Masculinity of Male's with Sex Changes,"<sup>95</sup> which

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<sup>94</sup> Gwan Kim Hyun Young et. al. 2001. *Masculinity and Gender*. Ja-eum & Mo-eum. 권김현영 등. <남성성과 젠더>. 자음과모음. 2001 년.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

unfortunately posits a morose under appreciation of gendering between the sexes.

The new concern on masculinity is indirectly a result of the realization in the country of the role gender plays in social crime, however a more direct crime-related factor for our purposes is the manifestation of gay-targeted hate crimes in the country.

From gay-targeted cons<sup>96</sup> to illegal gay saunas<sup>97</sup> to sexual molestation by AIDs inflicted homosexuals<sup>98</sup> to crimes that particularly focus on male sexual orientation<sup>99</sup>, it is clear that South Korea has now reached a precipice in which understanding the intricate interplay between male sexual identity and sexual orientation is essential.

#### -(4) Marriages of Convenience

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<sup>96</sup> The Chosun Ilbo. 2013 Jan. 16. <남자꽃뱀 동성애 교사 공무원 성추행 유도해 돈 뜯어>. [http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2013/01/16/2013011600515.html](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/01/16/2013011600515.html); The Chosun Ilbo. 2013 Jan. 15. <동성애 사이트서 만난 남성에게 성추행 유도한 20 대 꽃뱀男 영장>.

[http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2013/01/15/2013011502158.html?news\\_Head1](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/01/15/2013011502158.html?news_Head1)

<sup>97</sup> The Chosun Ilbo. 2012 Mar 06. <게이 목욕탕 운영하던 업주 불잡혀>.

[http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2012/03/06/2012030600035.html](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/03/06/2012030600035.html)

<sup>98</sup> The Chosun Ilbo. 2012. Nov. 15 <택시기사에 “내 스타일” 성추행한 에이즈감염 동성애자 입건>. Just to note, this article also shows the misguided connection between AIDS and homosexuality that is still prevalent in the country.

[http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2012/11/15/2012111501645.html?news\\_Head2](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/11/15/2012111501645.html?news_Head2)

<sup>99</sup> The Chosun Ilbo. 2008. Sept. 12 <부산서 판 남자와 술마신 동성애인 폭행>.

[http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2008/09/12/2008091200400.html](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2008/09/12/2008091200400.html); The Chosun Ilbo. 2005. Nov. 07. <변심한 동성연애자 폭행 30 대 영>.

[http://news.chosun.com/svc/content\\_view/content\\_view.html?contid=2005110770039](http://news.chosun.com/svc/content_view/content_view.html?contid=2005110770039)

The last case in which we see a new vector of both academia and social change in terms of queer-related studies and South Korea is the formation of ‘contract marriages’ between gays and lesbians. John (Song Pae) Cho (2009) in “The Wedding Banquet Revisited: ‘Contract Marriages’ Between Korean Gays and Lesbians” finds that in conforming to family values, gays and lesbians re-inscribe and conform to heteronormative values. He shows that in South Korea “...gays and lesbians marry heterosexual partners without revealing their sexual orientation, in order to ‘pass’ as straight.”<sup>100</sup> This interview-based research provides a significant cultural understanding of how gays and lesbians adjust and adapt to deal with the social constraints that they must bear. Yet what is of note is that while attempting to emphasize the “discursivity of sexual and gender norms,”<sup>101</sup> he binds his research within a hetero-homonormative paradigm. He does not venture into questioning whether beyond emotional attachment, a queer subject could also feel a physical/ emotional attraction or identify as a bisexual in such contractual relationships. This is regretful especially considering the impact it could have on the view of marriage and sexual identity. Because South Korea does not have a period of a media-driven

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<sup>100</sup> John (Song Pae) Cho. 2009 Spring. “The Wedding Banquet Revisited: ‘Contract Marriages’ between Korean Gays and Lesbians.” *Anthropology Quarterly*. Vol. 82. No. 2. p. 405.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* cit. 9. p. 420.

bisexual appeal that the US enjoyed in the 1970s, it is my contention that the formation—not origin—of this identity is currently driven by internal mechanisms and dynamics of sexuality.

## 2. Sexuality, Society, and Turning 20

During the interviews, the respondents mentioned several social factors that they felt mattered most in how they came to realize their sexual identities. When asked the question, “What do you believe is the connection of turning 20 and your sexual identity,” each of the respondents mentioned the following: (1) consideration of military service after high school; (2) leaving the home; (3) the dynamics of alcohol consumption<sup>102</sup>; (4) the influence of online pornography in early years<sup>103</sup>; (5) marriage and social pressures to find an opposite-sex partner; (6) prostitution while in the military<sup>104</sup>; and (6) family structure. A look at each of these factors is important to assessing the intricate interplay between socio-stigmatization, sexual behavior, and sexual identity.

In the case of the military, as mentioned above, all “healthy” men from the ages of 21 to 30 must serve the military service unless they fall under the provisions of Articles 26-43 of the Military Service Act as people who “...have physical or mental deficiencies, special family circumstances,

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<sup>102</sup> [http://www.ias.org.uk/resources/publications/theglobe/globe200103-04/gl200103-04\\_p30f2.jpg](http://www.ias.org.uk/resources/publications/theglobe/globe200103-04/gl200103-04_p30f2.jpg)

[http://www.ias.org.uk/resources/publications/theglobe/globe200103-04/gl200103-04\\_p30f3.jpg](http://www.ias.org.uk/resources/publications/theglobe/globe200103-04/gl200103-04_p30f3.jpg)

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.kan.or.kr/new/kor/sub3/filedata/200608/1315.pdf>

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.ymj.kr/Synapse/Data/PDFData/0069YMJ/ymj-41-205.pdf>

or skilled in a special or unusual profession.”<sup>105</sup> However, when that military service officially starts is a matter of individual choice and is often influenced by one’s family, the latter of which is often fitting the bill for college tuition. This is not to be taken lightly, since according to 2010 statistics 77.6% of all high school males matriculate directly into college after graduation.<sup>106</sup> And according to those interviewed, the military brings with it a substantial level of stress for all sexualities in South Korea.

For me...the military is extremely scary because I’m gay. I know I have to go and I know that I’ll get beat up or in trouble...or ostracized...if I can’t at least act straight. That’s why I have a girlfriend. Like...preparation. [G5]

I think guys learn to....to well...learn how to act in the military. (Do they teach sex in the military?) No...they don’t really teach sex. They sort of make you know that being gay is wrong....that a man should want a woman. The people around you make you feel that way. Always showing pictures or talking about girls they like who are famous. Even if you like a male actor...you somehow have to link him to how many girls he has...like you say...“he’s attractive to girls,” or “he’s nice...” because he has to have so many girls. At least that’s what I felt when I was there. [B4]

I went to the military and though I didn’t have sex or anything with other guys, I couldn’t help but look at them. I didn’t care if they were girls or boys. I seriously just wanted to have sex with anything. I was sick of masturbating and wanted to share feelings with someone. [H3]

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid. cit. 42. Choi. 2006. p. 133.

<sup>106</sup> Korea Statistics. 2012. “2010 Social Indicators.”

<http://kostat.go.kr/portal/english/news/1/8/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=254650>

And even sex within the military becomes a major issue that people who are gay or bisexual must face.

When I was in the army I had a boyfriend, and after I broke up with my boyfriend...I did it once with one of my colleagues in the army. We weren't in the same group and met through a friend...I was in an army that was more free in terms of giving leaves because we worked with the US Army. But I had to coordinate my schedule to meet with him because he couldn't leave as often....he was in the regular Korean Army. [G3]

In addition, leaving the home also supplies many men with the freedom to pursue their personal sex lives. This has a two-fold effect. First, it presents a financial risk to maintain family ties that could be ruined if one's sexual preference is revealed as anything other than heterosexual. Such realities make the concept of family a legitimate financial incentive, causing one to see opposite sex relations as an asset based more on pragmatics than on personal preference per se. Second, leaving the home allows for sexual experimentation that may otherwise not have been possible within the home. The out-of-home sexual freedom could have a strong impact on sexual behavior and on sexual identity formation, and often financing this new freedom links sex and money worries.

I live with my mom and dad, but not when I'm in school. I like that because it gives me some space. I can do what I want. That includes meeting people. The problem is my place is...well...small. I feel embarrassed to bring people. I think of it as a sex room. My home is with my parents, which is in Busan. [G5]

I moved out when I got into college. I probably would live with my parents if they were closer to the school...they....well...to be honest....I had a girlfriend and I need a place to have sex. As a student it's too expensive to go to love motels every week....I don't have a job...so asked my parents to help me with a one-room. [H1]

The third factor, the dynamics of alcohol consumption affect sexual behavior that could factor into one's sexual preference and sexual identity. It has been found that alcohol can exert a causal effect on one or more of the constituent responses leading to genital arousal. As such, alcohol has a causal impact on sexuality indices studied in laboratory conditions.<sup>107</sup> In essence, alcohol-stimulated behavior can lead to post-consumption sexual reactions and perceptions that could fundamentally change a person's view of sex as well as his sexual behavior. For college students in Korea, the likelihood that alcohol consumption will be a strong part of their college lives is high. According to the World Health Organization 1999 statistics, per capita consumption of alcohol in Japan was around 8 liters of pure alcohol per year, versus 9.4 for the USA, and 14.8 for South Korea, which accounts for the 13.1% of alcohol use disorders in men (cf. 2.25% and 5.45% in Japan and the US respectively).<sup>108</sup> In addition, statistics show that

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<sup>107</sup> George, W. H. & Stoner, S. A. 2000. "Understanding Acute Alcohol Effects on Sexual Behavior. *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 11:1, 92-124.

<sup>108</sup> Sharpe, et. al. (2001) in "Alcohol Consumption Decisions in Korea" argue that taxation could have played a role in these figures, which suggest that the Korean government has used alcohol-related taxes both to raise revenues and to encourage purchase of domestic



74% of persons between the ages of 20-29 drink in South Korea, while 96.4% of all male college students drink.<sup>109</sup> In a more recent survey conducted in 2013, it was found that 71% (N=4,061) of college respondents admitted that they are binge drinkers (i.e. they had more than five shots of soju, Korean rice liquor, in one sitting).<sup>110</sup> Drinking can play a major role in sexual identity formation and is an important aspect of college life in the country.

I didn't think much of it. {receiving fellatio from a man}..it wasn't a big deal...but well let's say if...as I just explained...after drinking alcohol...not liking the guy...well...just...well....just....well...just...well...how about this....like that? Just thinking sort of like that. So, not thinking it's so deep. That act well...I'm not thinking oh I have to do this...it's just oh well I did this... without thinking so much about it. Like that. [H2]

I drank a lot even when I was in high school...but..well...like...it didn't really matter. I mean....like...I guess after I turned 20...which was only last year, I could go to clubs. I met many girls there and also slept with a couple of guys. To be honest I like sex when drinking better. I mean I'm not drunk. It just makes all mistakes not so important...stress...no stress...that's what I mean. [B5]

Exposure to online pornography at young ages has also been found to have an ideation creation effect on the meaning and relevance of sex and

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spirits. However, the end result is that college educated young men were more likely to buy alcoholic beverages.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> *Chosunilbo* 8 Jun 2013. "Binge Drinking Rife Among University Students." [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2012/06/05/2012060501124.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/06/05/2012060501124.html)

sexuality. Though the link between youth exposure to sexual media and sexual identity formation has hardly been approached, Jochen Peter (2008) using a sample of adolescents aged 13-20 (N=2,343) found that frequent exposure to sexually explicit Internet material correlated with greater sexual uncertainty and a positive attitude toward uncommitted sexual exploration (i.e. sexual relations with casual partners/ friends or one-night stands). These findings could factor into explaining sexual experimentation especially considering that Internet usage between 6 and 19 years old went from 15% in 1999 to 90.6% in 2002 in South Korea.<sup>111</sup> This upsurge in Internet usage along with the strong policing of the Internet (including a strong ban on all age unverified pornography) from 2008 are important in current 20-27 year-old sexual identity formation.<sup>112</sup> All of the respondents said that they had frequented pornographic sites when they were in middle school. What was interesting here is that their responses were to questions about their sex education. They all said that pornography was their sex education. They also made clear distinctions between this and education on

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<sup>111</sup> Korea Network Information Center, 2002. 2002 Korea Internet Statistics Yearbook. Korea Network Information Center, Seoul

<sup>112</sup> See Fish, Eric S. 2009. "Is Internet Censorship Compatible with Democracy?: Legal Restrictions of Online Speech in South Korea." *Asia-Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law*.

pregnancy, contraceptives, and intercourse. The last of which did not take place in any classroom setting; the Internet played teacher instead.

As explained above, marriage and risk assessments are important reasons for explaining why a self-identified gay male might choose to have a relationship or even marry with a person of the opposite sex. In addition, with *Marriages of Convenience*,<sup>113</sup> fulfilling familial notions of social responsibilities matter despite one's chosen sexual identity. However, a self-proclaimed gay man who chooses to have a relationship with the opposite sex might not necessarily nullify a possible sexual attraction to women and this needs further study and consideration. However, findings from this research prove that even self-proclaimed gay and straight men admit to both an attraction and need for amorous relations with the opposite sex. The financial difficulties of the late 90s presented by Cho (2009) above no longer seem to directly affect our respondents when it comes to their selecting a sexual identity, instead they all felt that family and personal preference mattered more.

To be honest, I don't understand why a person would say they're gay or bisexual even if they are...all it does it destroy their family. Why can't they just have sex and stop talking about their sexual identity at all. It's just politics...just. [H5]

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<sup>113</sup> See p. 31.

You saw that movie right? It was call....yeah...No Regret...he was an orphan. I got mad when I saw that. Why make it like that? It was like saying it's a gay movie but also saying you should feel sorry for being gay...because of your family. Shit. [G3]

Another issue is the use of prostitution as a rite of passage for males conscripted into the army who have not had sexual relations with the opposite sex. Insook Kwon et. al. (2007) found that when asked the question “In the military, have you ever been forced to talk about sexual experiences, even when you did not want to?” 32.7% of their sample pool (N=667) responded affirmatively.<sup>114</sup> This study, which focused on sexual violence among men in the military, uses this question as a means of establishing the likely starting point of sexual violence some men receive in the military. However, it also suggests that one’s sexual experiences, especially in the military, are directly linked to one’s manhood. A high correlation was found between rank and forced sexual activity, with military seniors often forcing their juniors to engage in sex with themselves or with prostitutes (i.e. heterosexual sex). This could play a major role in sexual orientation ideation as well as in significantly influencing the development of sexual identities.

In the army you’ve just got a bunch of men massed together. Well...sex...kissing...I can’t really say, but there’s a great deal of skinship that goes beyond the norm. (Can you be more specific in terms of what you mean by skinship?) Well...even if it’s not

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<sup>114</sup> Kwon et. al. p. 1028.

that...even more than physical, there's the mental...like...there are cases like that. But me...well..we can't allow<sup>115</sup> that....but the problem is that they have no place to fall on....no place to put their feelings. They become dependent. So as far as the emotion...if you can call it bisexual...probably I'm wrong, but well I'd think that would...hmmmm... [H4]

I know that they like to force people to go have sex together. I don't want to sleep with a prostitute, but I think I would if they forced me. (How do you think they'd force you?) Oh you don't know the military here. They just force you. Like if you don't do it they will ignore you. You'll become ostracized. (So they bully you?) Yes. And so...if I had to then I would....but I'm not paying...ha ha. [G5]

One respondent even asserted that having sex with a prostitute does not necessary mean that he is not conservative. In his answer he even insuates that it was the conservative attitude that made him do it.

Yeah..how did the army come to frequent prostitutes? Hmm...I don't know if you know about this. You know that Koreans must go to the army, right? And I want to the Marines. And there it's really strict...the relationships are strong....especially the hierarchy. So I was only there for six months. And you only get exactly five days leave. And of course they call you. "Hey, where you at?" They say, "come here I'll pay." It's an extreme matter of dignity...of respecting superiority. [H4]

Finally, the family structure and particular the sibling sex ratio has been an interest since the 1930s and examined fairly extensively in sexual orientation studies. Blanchard (1998), for example, found that homosexual men have a higher number of older brothers, while Bogaert (2005) found

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<sup>115</sup> The exact expression that was used was “용납이 안 되니까.”

that on average the weight of the evidence suggests that homosexual men have a higher sibling ratio than that of heterosexuals but was only significant in terms of the birth order effect.<sup>116</sup> Clearly, this research does not focus on this factor and instead probes whether the same effects are similar to the case of South Korea. However, it should be noted that family structure does play a possible role in sexual identity formation, though all of the respondents claimed that their family structures had little effect on their personal sexual identities.

When I was young, my dad would often be at work. I lived with my two sisters, mom, and grandma. I was always with my sisters. They raised me like they were my mother, because my mom was so busy in the home. (So was it the reason for your choice?) It wasn't the reason of course, but now that I look back on it...more and more I think this is something from birth that can be influenced by family. [B3]

In addition to the above factors, there is exhaustive research detailing the strong correlations between sexual abuse and sexual orientation.

However, persons whom have experienced sexual abuse<sup>117</sup> were excluded from this research.

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<sup>116</sup> See Bogaert, Anthony. F. (2005) "Sibling Sex Ratio and Sexual Orientation in Men and Women: New Tests in Two National Probability Samples." *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. 43: 1; Feb. 2005 & Bogaert, A. F. (1998). "Birth order, sibling sex ratio, and sexual orientation in nonwhite men." *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 27, 467-473.

<sup>117</sup> By sexual abuse, I mean the forced molestation or forcing of undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another. This also entails sexual assault, which is usually shorter in duration and of a non-frequent nature, as well as statutory rape or sexual relations of an adult with a victim who has not reached the age of consent.

ID	AGE	SEX ID	Has alcohol played a role in your having had sex and (how often?)	When did you start and how often did you do Online Porn?	Do you believe others pressure you to get married or have a girlfriend?	Did your brothers or sisters play a role in why you chose your sexuality?
B1	24	B/G	Yes (4)	MIDDLE (3/ WK)	O	O
B2	26	B/H	Yes (?)	MIDDLE (?)	O	X
B3	21	B	Yes (1)	MIDDLE (OFTEN)	O	O
B4	23	B/H	Yes (10+)	MIDDLE (?)	O	X
B5	21	B	Yes (2)	MIDDLE (?)	X	N/A
G1	24	G	No	MIDDLE (OFTEN)	X	X
G2	20	G	Yes (1)	MIDDLE (NOT OFTEN)	O	X
G3	25	G	Yes (10+)	MIDDLE (OFTEN)	O	X
G4	22	G	Yes (2)	MIDDLE (?)	X	N/A
G5	23	G	Yes (5+)	MIDDLE (?)	O	X
H1	23	H	No	MIDDLE (OFTEN)	X	X
H2	25	H	Yes (10+)	MIDDLE (OFTEN)	X	N/A
H3	27	H	Yes (5+)	MIDDLE (OFTEN)	O	N/A
H4	24	H	No	MIDDLE (OFTEN)	O	X
H5	20	H	No	MIDDLE (?)	X	X

**TABLE 2**

**-MIDDLE= Middle School**

**-(#)= Number of times**

**-N/A= No brothers or sisters**

From the above, self-identified bisexuals all suffered from stress from others to get married or make a girlfriend. They also had a high incidence of believing that their siblings played a role in their sexuality choice.

Unfortunately, this research did not scope or probe into why this may have played a role.

The next chapter discusses the factors that are important in sexual identity formation in South Korea as well as how bisexuality could break the hetero-homosexual normative paradigm that is currently forming in the country.



### 3. The Meaning of “Sex” and the Problem of Sexual Identity

South Korea presents an interesting etymological case in which non-Korean words are often adopted from other languages and take on prescribed meanings for the articulation of sexual identities and even acts. For example, there is no pure Korean word that translates directly as sexual intercourse.<sup>118</sup> The words used for the sexual act are *seonggyou* (성교), a word adopted from the Chinese *xìngjiāo* (性交), and *sekkse* (섹스) the English phonetic rendering of the word sex. Unlike other adopted words into the language that are used to articulate non-native ideas, actions, and the like, sex is one idea and act that is not foreign to South Korea or to any other country. Why then the absence of a pure Korean term and the adoption of a Western/ non-Korean starting from the 20<sup>th</sup> century? And how, if at all, does this influence the act itself?

Prior to the early 1990s, the country had no personal pronouns for “he” or “she” in the language—a single third-person pronoun was used for both genders. The change is purportedly the results of globalization and the subsequent need for translations—an adoption whose usage has become

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<sup>118</sup> There are also many euphemistic, metaphorical, and slang terms for intercourse. However, these terms are considered vulgar, often metaphorically graphic or indirect, and typically linked to non-human items. For this reason, the word sex is still externalized as something that is not necessarily linked to the country.

commonplace, and one that has made women more visible in academia and in the Korean language. Would this apply similarly to sex? Has sex become a Foucaultian subject of discourse that simply needed ways to articulate itself? Perhaps. But one thing is certain: not only is sex considered taboo, it remains external rather than intrinsic to society. It is an act that may be talked about but not lived. What is interesting, however, is the inter-relationships between the meaning of sex and the sexual identities that have made their way into the country and the terms adopted to articulate pre-existing sexual behavior.

Though sex is a term adopted from the West, the boundaries of its meaning are as obscure in South Korea and often extend beyond Western notions of public and private. This adoption is mismatched in that in the West what "...counts as sexual has been constructed in terms of gender hierarchy."<sup>119</sup> And this gender-based assessment almost always includes sexual genitalia and beliefs regarding femininity and masculinity. However, the truth is that human desires and practices are discursively constituted. For this reason, it is hard to locate South Korea's interpretation of sex within this discourse especially when it comes to how the country determines what

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<sup>119</sup> Jackson, Stevi. 1996. "Heterosexuality as a Problem for Feminist Theory." *Sexualizing the Social*. p. 19.

is sexual and what is not. Thus an investigation into how sexual behavior and identity in South Korea combine is paramount in the country.

To be clear, Western notions of sex and sexual acts are particularly rooted in the conceptual fragility of heterosexuality. Penelope (1993), for example, pointed out that “heterosexuality qualifies only as a prefabricated way of living that one slips into anonymously...Remove the social institutions which support it, and the whole fragile edifice will collapse.”<sup>120</sup> As a result heterosexuality requires strict behavioral codification.

What comes to the fore here is that South Korea has developed its own developmental and institutionalized construct of heterosexuality as an identity that has arisen from the necessity of considering non-heterosexual identities. This differs starkly from the West where heterosexual was originally defined as “an abnormal or perverted sexual appetite toward the opposite sex,”<sup>121</sup> and only later was it interpreted as an identity.

Though some could argue that in terms of identity politics such distinctions do not matter, that the binary of heterosexual and homosexual exists in both the West and in South Korea and are often framed within this

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<sup>120</sup> Penelope, J. 1993. “Heterosexual identity: Out of the closets. In S. Wilkinson, & C. Kitzinger (eds), *Heterosexuality*. London: Sage., p. 264.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. p. 262.

political context, and to a certain extent they would be correct. However, where this difference does matter is in complex realities of behavior that has been appropriated to these sexual identities. Namely, a gay in the West is not necessarily a *gei* in South Korea and such distinctions must be considered in understanding the meaning of sex and its connection with sexuality.

This difference in the meaning of sex, sexual orientation, and particularly how such concepts link to sexual identities is in part due to the stereotypes of what is considered masculinity or femininity in South Korea and whether such distinctions matter when it comes to sexual intimacy.

Like I said, I'm not so sure if that would mean they're bisexual....simply because they really do need someone to put their feelings. But that seems to be something necessary in the Army. (So a matter of masculinity?) Maybe it starts that way, but sex is the main reason. [H4]

For me, it's really not possible to tell the difference between a gay and a straight guy in South Korea. We don't act so strong like they show guys on TV. I guess we probably all look bisexual. (How does a bisexual look?) I guess they would be....like...a mixture between like a man and like a woman, right? [H5]

As stated, the meaning of masculinity—the codified behavior so essential to maintaining the fragile nature of heterosexual behavior in Western countries like the US—plays a much weaker role when it comes to South Korea. When formulating opinions related to how homosexuals,

heterosexuals, and bisexuals act, most of the replies were that homosexuals were more feminine than heterosexuals, while bisexuals were both feminine and masculine. Yet, when asked what the meaning of these sexual identities were, every respondent focused more on internal traits than on external appearances or sexual behavior.<sup>122</sup>

The inclusion of bisexuality creates an inability to rely heavily on stereotypes that have often served as means of differentiating lifestyle traits that have taken root in other conceivably more sexually liberal cultures such as the US. Stereotypes in South Korea that are rooted in the effects of the myth of a pink economy, that every self-proclaimed gay has the personae of affluence,<sup>123</sup> and the propensity for high-end brand names and expensive make-up, for example, are not markers of masculinity or femininity as they are in places like the US. As a result, differentiating the ascribed identities from the external characteristics often calls for consideration of a third, somewhat multiple personae, when it comes to understanding bisexuals and bisexuality—which, as can be imagined, causes heterosexuals and homosexuals to rely solely on internal attributes when it came to defining a bisexual.

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<sup>122</sup> See V (2).

<sup>123</sup> Brown, Gavin. 2009. "Thinking beyond homonormativity: Performative explorations of diverse gay economies." *Environment & Planning A*.

#### 4. Sexual Fetishism and Ethics in South Korea

On 7 March 2013, a district court sentenced two men to six and eight months, respectively for uploading pornographic video clips of adult women performing sexual acts in high school uniforms.<sup>124</sup> According to the revised Youth Protection Law, adult pornographic actors dressed in high school or middle school uniforms are also considered underaged (19 or below) youth.<sup>125</sup> And under this law, producing, distributing and owning such films or videos are strictly in violation of the law.

With religious origins, fetish and its link to sexual behavior or disfunction has sent powerful messages around the world—messages that have also been felt in South Korea. *Feitiço* and its pidgin equivalent, *fetisso*, have been linked in history with both pertaining to the idea of witchcraft and idolating.<sup>126</sup> It is an idea that has been misappropriated to West African mysticism and social barbarism, and one that has been seen as a linguistic void created primarily by an inability to articulate one's desire or true feelings for the not-so-normal/ abnormal. "Fetishism is simply a fad of the tongue...something with no real meaning—a mere word used to

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<sup>124</sup> Korea Times. "Fetishism: Disorder or Preference." 11 June 2013.

<sup>125</sup> 2012. 9. 16. 법률 제 11048 호. 아동·청소년의 성보호에 관한 법률 [兒童·青少年—性保護—關—法律. Law §11048 *Youth Protection Law* 2012.09.16.

<sup>126</sup> Bang Won-Il. 2011. "Fetishism: Historical Notion and Meaning at Korean Missionaries." *Religion and Culture*. 21 ed. (Seoul National University Religious Research Institute). pp. 103-119.

barbarianize and show contempt.”<sup>127</sup> It is this meaning that has caused a strong predicament in South Korea, a country where confession is not necessarily seen as a means of revealing a truth that people can and will accept. To confess a fetish in South Korea—truth or not—can lead to social circumstances that would prove detrimental not only to one’s sexual identity formation, but also to one’s peace of mind and social relations.

No, I don’t think I’m bisexual. I just do it for fun. I like getting sucked. I don’t see that as my identity. I don’t have feelings for guys. It’s just something that I like. [H2]

This reply could be seen as fulfilling a sexual fetish. However, the lack of an emotional attachment linked to some desire or fantasy makes seeing such behavior difficult to interpret directly as mere fetish fulfillment. In this research, it was clear that fetishes and fetish fulfillment were not even acceptable amongst queers in South Korea.

I like younger guys. I mean not really young, but guys who are in high school turn me on. It’s not the age. I like it when guys wear uniforms...to be honest, I like *even* military guys. Even though...maybe you don’t know. But in Korea, people don’t like military guys...they say...well...that the uniform smells. I don’t like the smell too. But I like the look. (Is it related to masculinity?) No, I think it’s more about feeling...well...maybe I guess...they look more manly. (Do you tell your friends, even gay friends about this?) No, I don’t tell them. (Why?) Well...I don’t want them to see me as a pervert. [G3]

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid. cit. 165. Translation of Robertson Smith (1894): “페티시즘은 그저 유행하는 말일 뿐 정확한 의미라곤 없는말”이며 “단지 매우 야만적이고 경멸적인 무언가를 의미할 뿐”이다.”

I was unable to uncover much about fetishes in the interviews. Most respondents either denied having ever had a fetish or did not understand what it really meant and immediately connected it with perversion.

Oh, do you mean if I'm like a pervert...like do I like women's feet or something? No, in our country that kind of stuff is not really big here. It's perverted. [H3]

Amongst the research pool, even the respondents who claimed to have very easy-going sexual lifestyles that include one-night stands, stated that they either did not have a fetish or that fetishes were perverse.



## 5. Bisexual Identity and Bisexual Curiosity

When social sex-roles are rigidly defined in a society, there may be less social approval for an individual to vary between female and male sex-type behaviors than to adopt a single sex role—even if that role is at odds with the individual’s actual biological sex. Thus a society can demand that a deviant “outgroup” conform in certain respects to the values of the dominant group.

Jay P. Paul (1984)<sup>128</sup>

Bisexuality finds itself in a unique bind in South Korea. On the one hand, it exists in the country. On the other hand, its lack of readily identifiable lifestyle traits coupled with a society founded on conformity, makes it an “outgroup” that is not readily accepted either by the sexual mainstream or by the minority baseline in the country. As such, even those who partake in and enjoy sexual relations with both sexes find bisexuality to be an undesired option for the simple reason that it does not signify a socially accepted or understood personality, making it an easy target of disdain and rebuke. As such, it is difficult to assess the differences between mere bisexual curiosity and the formation of a bisexual identity because even frequent bisexually curious behavior is continuously looked as merely marginal sexual behavior.

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<sup>128</sup> Paul, Jay P. (1984). “The Bisexual Identity: An Idea Without Social Recognition” in *Bisexual and Homosexual Identities: Critical Theoretical Issues*. (University of California Press). p. 58.

I often have sex with my girlfriend, but as I said before it's just because I was curious about it...that's why I did it the first time. (Do you enjoy it?) I don't hate it, but I'm still gay. (Not bisexual?). No, not at all. It's because the feeling isn't behind it. It's just sex. Hmm...I guess in the US you'd say we just fuck.<sup>129</sup> Maybe she feels it, but I don't. [G2]

Uh....what I wanted....one time....just...well...having become so close...like...uh...but like...I want to have sex....that kind of feeling was totally absent...just like...with him...just...I wanted to be closer, it was just kind of like that feeling. (You've done it on more than one occasion?) Yeah, sure. (Did you like it?) Well, I didn't dislike it. But that doesn't mean I'm bisexual. I like girls. Sex is just for fun. [H2]

Bisexual curiosity is not seen as a state of sexual experimentation leading to sexuality preference in South Korea. This is because such acts are not interpreted as curiosity as such. Instead this sexual behavior and “play”<sup>130</sup> may be within the realm of “...a fantastic factory of nature and production”<sup>131</sup> that does not lend itself well to solidification of mental states at all. William E. Burleson found the same to be true when discussing the effects of culture on male sexuality in Afghanistan:

In fact, in the West as in elsewhere, there are always people who transgress from their cultural norms. Obviously just because there is no room in a culture for, say, lesbians, doesn't mean there aren't people who feel that way, and if given the words, may identify as such.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Here the respondent used the English word for the explicit.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. H2.

<sup>131</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *AnAnti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1983)

<sup>132</sup> Burleson, William E. (2008). “The Kinesy Scale and the Pashtun: The Role of Culture in Measuring Sexual Orientation.” in Ron J. Suresha’s *Bisexuality Perspectives on the Life and Work of Alfred C. Kinsey*. p. 73.

The respondents in this research did not appear to see bicuriousness as either a sexual orientation or as acts leading to sexual identity in South Korea.

Personally, I've never even heard of such a thing. [H4]

This was primary the response of all the participants.

## **6. Summary**

As presented above, this chapter used interview results to present the salient social factors in sexual identity formation in South Korea. The responses of the participants led to four assessments of social aspects related to one's sexual identity formation in South Korea.

First, turning 20 years old in South Korea presented the respondents with new social stigmas and pressures that played roles in their sexual identity formation. Particularly strong was the question of how to deal with military service for those respondents who are homosexuals or bisexuals. In addition, most of the respondents said that at that age they had moved out of the home and matriculated into college, which gave them added freedom for sexual experimentation. However, according to the results, bisexuals seemed to focus the experience of turning 20 as a turning point in which they were pressured by others to find girlfriends or consider marriage.

Second, all of the bisexuals and most of the homosexuals admitted that alcohol played roles in their sexual behaviors, while they all said that they were first exposed to sex via Internet pornography. (This will be discussed further in the next chapter.)

Third, the meaning of sex in South Korea and the notion of private versus public space is not the same as it is in Western countries like the US.

For one, sex is interpreted as an externalized practice outside of daily life that does not come down to even aroused touching of genitalia. In addition, merely having sexual relations—including oral and anal sex—does not necessarily serve as means of realizing one’s sexual identity, even if it is performed repeatedly.

Fourth, bisexuality could be considered sexual fetish fulfillment and not constitutive of a sexual identity in South Korea. In addition, the respondents proved that fetishes in South Korea are shunned as signs of perversion. For this reason, adopting a bisexual identity may prove politically difficult for self-proclaimed gays who live what could be bisexually active lives.

And finally, bisexual curiosity is not interpreted as an experimental behavior that can be found in South Korea, though Western-interpreted bisexual curious behavior is admittedly normal according to the respondents. As such, coming to terms with one’s bisexuality as a possible identification is difficult. One’s experimentation with the same sex is not seen as sexual identity forming behavior thus nullifying any notion of bisexual curious behavior. Such a self-reflexive interpretation of one’s sexual activities was unheard of by most of the respondents.

#### **IV. The Production of Queer Discrimination in South Korea**

##### **1. Hetero-Homo Dichotomization in South Korean Scholarship**

As explained above, studies on male sexual orientation in South Korea have no definitive linear evolution, and are instead highly dependent on issue-specificity. One such area is academia in which efforts to enhance social development and globalization were vigorously sought after in the beginning of the 1990s and took off in the mid-90s. During this period, South Korea adopted several theories regarding gender that ultimately pushed for a more neo-liberal acceptance of sexual difference, which was tempered in part by a steady rise in Internet usage, a high level of information diffusion, and the belief that global trends necessitated accepting such differences. This acceptance, however, was uni-directionally directed at understanding and accepting gay males as the cornerstone proving the country's acceptance and understanding of sexual minorities; other sexual minorities were marginalized within the hetero-homosexual paradigm notwithstanding. And more significant, the wayward effects on male sexual identity, and notably on homosexuality, caused by the Asian financial crisis of 1996-7 created a new need to rethink the meaning of gay in South Korea.

The “queer globalization” movement that predated the financial crisis of 1996, led to a re-evaluation of two seemingly conflicting concepts, namely individual liberalism and family values. Those men who had grown up through the 1970s and 80s, who had relished in their homosexual identities in the early 90s, and who had chosen to forgo the traditional family structure were now forced to re-evaluate their past choices. Seeking a relationship founded on love became associated with a real-life gamble that pitted pursuing one’s homosexual relations against family and security. This tendency also filtered into the academic discourse on family & financial risk assessments.

Whereas men prior to the financial crises functioned more or less as the bread bearers for the family, after the financial crises there was a growth in the number of married women joining the labor force.<sup>133</sup> The new presence of women competing alongside men led to a proliferation of studies on gender that was aimed at understanding the male-female divide as well as to an increase of studies geared toward breaking the country from gender-based power inequalities that were seen as products of colonization and Confucian patriarchal pasts. The impetus for investigating sexuality as

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<sup>133</sup> Kim, Seung-kyung & Finch, John. 2002. “Confucian Patriarchy Reexamined: Korean Families and the IMF Economic Crisis.” *The Good Society*. Penn State University Press. Vol. 11. pp. 43-49.

a result of economics leading to individual liberties began to take a back seat. This is in stark contrast to the case of the US mentioned above (Chapter II.2).

South Korea's feminist movements did not carry the issues of male sexuality to the forefront of social discourse as they had in the US—instead, they led to the exact opposite. The Asian financial crises further shunned the issue of homosexuality from the South Korean feminists movement, while also creating a new discriminative complexity even within the gay community itself.

As mentioned above, the Western emphasis on *coming out* that is historically embedded in religious notions of confession as truth-telling is not the convention of self-identified homosexuals in South Korea. John Cho (2013) in “The Complicated Lives of Gay Men in South Korea,” for example, while summing his 2007-2009 research of South Korean gay men found that “...the idea of ‘coming out’ was never an issue [in South Korea]; the assumption is that everyone remains in the closet.”<sup>134</sup> For this reason, research such as Cho's has adopted the concept of a fragmented gay identity, between what he calls “bats” (married gay men) and “geese [gay] fathers” (fathers who live alone in South Korea while they send their wives

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<sup>134</sup> UCLA International Institute, “The Complicated Lives of Gay Men in South Korea.” A review of a lecture given on April 2, 2013 by Anthropologist John Cho.



and children abroad to ensure their children's educations and future successes). Cho accurately assesses the complex divide that South Korean self-proclaimed gay men face in light of the financial sensitivities they have acquired as a result of the crisis, drawing the conclusion that men who engage in same-sex relationships live lives that "...require hyper-vigilance on their part: a process of constant self-scrutiny and endless attempts to look and act 'straight'." <sup>135</sup> However, contrary to Cho's apparent goals, dualizing the gay identity within the homosexual archetype retroactively simplifies the reality of sexual orientations and identities that exist in the country. The truth is this "either-or" and "splitting" of sexual identity is pleasingly simple and therefore attractive, but the resultant dichotomy convolutes the full range of possible sexualities, and also takes a toll on many who find their sense of self invalidated by society's presuppositions about sex and sexual identity; sexuality extends beyond the homosexual-heterosexual binary. Because sexual behavior, not simply identity, is a powerful determinant of social roles and social stigmatization, it is important to consider bisexuality as a reasonable option even within homosexuality-driven studies. So though Cho adds a layer of complexity to the meaning of homosexuality, he

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

completely overlooks whether his participants are exclusive homosexuals<sup>136</sup> or whether bisexuality could account for their behavioral differences.

A trait in South Korea that is similar to that of the West is to see bisexuality as something outside the boundaries of normal sexual development, as a step on the way to developing heterosexual or homosexual identities. This is a theory somewhat akin to what Freud devised in 1905 as a sexual continuum for homosexuals (only) as (1) absolute inverts; (2) amphigenic inverts; or (3) contingent inverts<sup>137</sup>—a theory that renders bisexuality obsolete due to its overwhelming academic simplicity. However, this theory fails to take into account the findings of Ford and Beach (1951) that “...one cannot classify homosexual tendencies and heterosexual tendencies as being mutually exclusive or even opposed to each other.”<sup>138</sup> It is my assertion that the preoccupation with gender and sexual identity as a means of understanding sexual orientation—a preoccupation that is fairly Western-centric—in effect leads to an un-natural categorical codification of sexuality while also producing and reproducing the discrimination that often gender studies claim to fight against.

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<sup>136</sup> Here I mean in terms of sexual identity, not simply in terms of sexual behavior.

<sup>137</sup> Freud, S. *Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 18. London: Hogarth Press, 1905. pp. 146-148.

<sup>138</sup> Ford, C.S., & Beach, F. A. *Patterns of Sexual Behavior*. New York: Harper & Row, 1951. p. 236.

Seo Dong-Jin (2001) also finds that in terms of research on homosexuality “...there are no sources showing a significant link between the numerous social changes affecting Korea as it has transformed into a capitalist society and the emergence of a gay identity.”<sup>139</sup> This is a significant point in terms of how to evaluate the social significance in the growth of gay-related studies in the country as opposed to its development in South Korean academia. However, as Seo attempts to prove, the topic of homosexuality as both a social issue as well as an academic one is making some headway. Yet the issue of sexuality is clearly a socially driven one as opposed to a pen-driven one in South Korea. Seo also argues that “sexual behavior, reduced to sexual identity, is able to provide unique insights into the situation of homosexuals,”<sup>140</sup> but the question remains at what costs. There is clearly a need to investigate, even from the anthropological direction, the relationship between sexual orientation and sexual behavior beyond the politics of sexual identity in South Korea. Unfortunately, these efforts seem to be driven more by the next two sections regarding politics and media than by the issue of sexual behavior alone.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid. cit. 36. p.68.

<sup>140</sup> Seo Dong-jin. 2001. “Mapping the Vicissitudes of Homosexual Identities in South Korea.” *Journal of Homosexuality*

<sup>141</sup> The first gender studies program was established at Yonsei University in 2001.

## **2. Politically driven, Sexuality-based Organizations & Queer**

### **Generalization**

Perhaps the most logical means of which to trace any understanding of a country's sexuality-oriented discrimination would lie in the creation of and difficulties amongst sexual-based communities within the country. This is no different for the case of South Korea, with the exception of one important distinction: collective subjectivity seems the result of progressive public dissonance rather than vice-versa.

Though self-identified homosexuals developed not only small communities and enclave factors that include bars, cruising areas, and even community-based slang<sup>142</sup>, the gay identity itself was "...reduced to some perverted or shocking acts performed by a few people"<sup>143</sup> and not considered either a political issue nor given any social existence until the late-1990s. This is because no public discourse aimed at forming the laws

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<sup>142</sup> As the community developed, words such as *pogal*, which is a backward reading of *karlbo* also developed. While the former meant prostitute (used predominately toward those women who served Western soldiers), the latter was used as a term of self-degradation. The term *Iban* (*ehban*) was also developed as a counterpart to *ilban* meaning universal and was used to denote one's homosexual affiliation. Several arguments have gone into the distinction between *Iban* (*ehban*) meaning "second class," i.e. second class citizen, and written with the Chinese character for 2 (二般) or whether the term means "abnormal," written (異般) since both Chinese characters have the same Korean pronunciation.

<sup>143</sup> Seo Dong-jin. 2001. "Mapping the Vicissitudes of Homosexual Identities in South Korea." *Journal of Homosexuality*. p. 70.

and regulations with any consideration of homosexuality at the national level. What broke this denial of homosexual existence was the effort first of social activist groups and later of students who modeled themselves activists pushing for progressiveness backed by the ethics of equality and human rights.

The first such organization was the *Cho'donghoe* Organization, which in the later 90s broke up into *Chingusai* and the lesbian organization *Kkirikkiri*. Chang Chinseok, a Korean student who had studied abroad in the US, founded *Cho'donghoe*. He also organized a similar Chingusai group for Korean-Americans in New York. His efforts eventually led to the formation of several other groups—almost all of which were school-based organizations: Come Together (Yonsei University, 1995) and Maum001 (Seoul National University, 1995). Later an umbrella organization, the Korean Homosexual Human Rights Association was formed to unite Chingusai, Kkirikkiri, and Maum001. However, all have since individualized, transformed, or disbanded completely. The point is that up until 1995 few sexual orientation-based organizations existed despite these sexual minorities having already had a strong, albeit invisible, membership in society. And as can be seen through the development of these organizations, globalization and the desire to be politically active led to a

particular reproduction rather than the dissolution of discrimination that they sought to achieve. To better understand this point, an appreciation of the concept of marginalization and use of sexual labels is necessary.

First, marginalization refers to the set of circumstances that people who have not found (or cannot accept) clear group-membership roles in society face.<sup>144</sup> An interesting note is that though most Koreans are familiar with the word *yangseongaeja*, or literally “side-by-side [homo/hetero] sexualities” most commonly used to refer to bisexuality, the sexual identity has been completely ignored both in academia, on the political front, and only touched on briefly in media. The political connection that has been made between sexual orientation, identity, and social movements has been directed specifically at understanding only how the perceived opposite of heterosexuality survives while other queers (e.g. transgender, intersex, bisexuals, and so on) receive only minimal consideration if any at all.

The first such movement was organized in 1994 and centered around the realization that HIV/ AIDS was no longer a foreign issue. This movement was supported and organized as one that centered less on sexual orientation than on addressing a sexual disease. Such issues as human rights and military conscription and South Korea’s first Korea Queer Culture

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<sup>144</sup> Paul, J. P. 2010. “The Bisexual Identity: An Idea Without a Social Recognition.” *Journal of Homosexuality*. p. 53

Festival brought identity to the forefront in June 2000. Yet even despite these efforts, queer sexualities remained foreign, which often received criticism abroad for externalizing gay events as something particularly non-Korean.<sup>145</sup>

What is most significant in the connection between politics and sexual identity is often that the movements do not necessarily reflect the collective subjectivity of the members they aim or claim to represent. It is a question that Seo (2001) poses in his attempt to map the vicissitudes of homosexual identities in South Korea, namely, “if a homosexual movement is only possible on the basis of a collective subjectivity, [then] how do homosexuals form a significant social identity?” This is a question that has been answered from several directions of which politics and education are the usual sources. However, there is some substance to the argument that South Korea, with the issue of queer sexualities, suffers from reverse orientalism in which “[un]like Western orientalism, this [the confused race to Westernize] is a reproduced orientalism coming from the orient itself.”<sup>146</sup> And if this is the case, what would be the effects of differing dimensions

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<sup>145</sup> Even today, the event is labeled one of a “culture” that seemingly ‘normal’ Koreans can get a “...glimpse into homosexuality in Seoul” rather than one that was geared toward increasing of queer sexualities as a non-foreign aspect of the country. See <http://www.mappingwords.com/2012/06/06/seouls-13th-korean-queer-culture-fest/>

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. cit. 2. p. 77.

regarding the meaning of sex and sexuality when one considers even simple ideas such as consideration that a South Korean *gei* is not the same as an non-Korean<sup>147</sup> gay, or that a South Korean *gei* could fit much more in line with a non-Korean bisexual? What then would this mean for the political connections and motivations that support seemingly “gay,” “lesbian,” or even “bisexual”-oriented movements? It is here that we get the image that media has played a large role in forming the meaning of sexual identities in South Korea and it is here that we will divert our attention.

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<sup>147</sup> Here I’m referring to the nationality not the ethnicity.



### 3. Media's Role in Promoting the Homo-Hetero Divide

Perhaps one of the strongest forces driving the hetero-homosexual paradigm in South Korea is media. The rate of Internet usage in 1999 alone was 22.4%, but had increased more than 58% by June of 2002, surpassing the US's 50% the same year. The prevalence of Internet usage by Korean adolescents between 6 and 19 years old was at 50% in 1999, and by 2002 had increased to 90.6%.<sup>148</sup> It is also through this medium that sexuality-oriented discussions, bulletin board systems, and the surge in online cruising through SNS smart technology applications surged. In the early 2000s, on-line conversations using chatting sites like Another Love<sup>149</sup>, Queernet, and Rainbow<sup>150</sup> sites opened up direct dialogue concerning sexual orientation between younger ages. Gradually this opened up doors for spreading Western/ non-Korean notions of sexuality that included such topics as *coming out* and provided a platform in which homosexual intellectuals could discuss topics that mattered to them. This virtual space also led to more dialogue on sexuality amongst the heterosexual community. However, the growth of the online sexual community was not without its battles.

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<sup>148</sup> Internet addiction in Korean adolescents

<sup>149</sup>또 하나의 사랑. *Do hana wui sarang*.

<sup>150</sup>무지개. *Moojigae*.

In September 2001, the Korea Internet Safety Commission classified all gay and lesbian websites as “harmful materials” that could potentially harm minors and youth and ordered that they be shut down.<sup>151</sup> And according to the Commission, “...homosexuality was classified under the category of ‘obscenity and perversion’ in its ‘Criteria for Indecent Internet Sites.’”<sup>152</sup> This ban was summarily lifted in 2003, erasing homosexuality from the list but maintained a ban on obscene and nude sites that did not verify users’ ages through the national ID registry. Regardless, the growth in the Internet and smart applications has made both strong sources for explorations into sexuality and sex education in South Korea.

Media and inquiry into sexuality has been strongest in South Korea’s popular culture scene, which benefited from the country’s desire to both globalize itself and market its culture abroad. *Hallyu* (韓流), or the “Korean Wave,” is used to describe the popularity of South Korean popular culture that grew particularly from global interest in domestic dramas in the early 2000s.<sup>153</sup> The term *Hallyu* was initially a descriptive term used to denote

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<sup>151</sup> This order directly ex-zone ([www.exzone.com](http://www.exzone.com)).

<sup>152</sup> Chung, Jongpil. 2008. “Comparing Online Activities in China and South Korea: The Internet and the Political Regime.” University of California Press. p. 739.

<sup>153</sup> See Han, H.J. & Lee, J.S. 2008. “A Study on the KBS TV Drama Winter Sonata and its Impact on Korea’s *Hallyu* Tourism Development.” *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*.

the spontaneous interest in South Korea, but soon came to represent a government-backed tool for spreading South Korean culture abroad.

This boom in South Korea's media abroad has led to a growing interest both politically and domestically in the soft power effects of South Korea's popular media.<sup>154</sup> And though *Hallyu* has been controversially accepted as a unilateral transference of culture, rather than a reciprocal exchange, it has also had a profound effect of loosening some of the restrictions on popular domestic media. The proliferation of domestic films and videos containing homosexuality is part and parcel to this loosening.

In the early 2000s, several movies featuring gay themes were created. *Road Movie* (2002), for example, centered on a love triangle between a woman who falls in love with a man and a male friend who in turn falls in love with him. Though the movie does not depict either man as characters with gay identities, the contextual love between men in the film was the first of its kind in the country. Yet it was far from depicting elements of gay social life. If anything, it merely pushed the boundaries of friendship and intimacy, while only slightly touching on the question of male queer sexuality.

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<sup>154</sup> See Oh, Y. 2009. "*Hallyu*: The Rise of Transnational Cultural Consumers in China and Japan." *Korea Observer*.; Kim, J. 2007. "Why Does *Hallyu* Matter? The Significance of the Korean Wave in South Korea." *Critical Studies in Television*.; Kim, Chong-hwi. 2004. "Appealing to Common Sentiments in the *Hallyu* Sphere." *Munwha Ilbo* (13 July).

In 2005, *The King and the Clown* took the question of male sexuality a step further by delving into the controversial nature of male-to-male intimacy. The theme was one of homosexuality in a traditional setting and attracted many viewers who were both shocked and spellbound by the King falling in love with his effeminate jester. However, little more than the theme itself could be seen as remotely related to the question of homosexuality and same-sex acts on par with those of contemporary South Korean society. Yet it was only one year later that the quiet on gay relationships in South Korean movies was lifted.

*No Regret* (2006) is considered the first gay film in South Korea and presents both cultural elements of contemporary gay life in the country as well as frontal nudity. The main character, an orphan, is presented as openly gay from the outset, and not without reason. Trapped between filial duties and individual sexual liberties, viewers are quickly reminded of the Korean adage that “only orphans come out [of the closet],”<sup>155</sup> which somewhat strips the impact of the movie’s main character as a ‘normal’ gay participant in South Korean’s family-oriented society. Instead, it presents a Marxist-oriented approach to homosexuality as acts committed by heterosexuals, when financial necessity requires it. The main character works as a blue-

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid. cit. 98 p. 2.

collar worker, is forced into the sexual industry after having quit his job, and eventually finds himself in a conflicting sexual relationship with a client who himself experiences the conflict between homosexuality and family obligations later in the movie. The film, directed by Leesong Hee-il, an openly gay film director, successfully provided somewhat realistic references to aspects of the subcultural trends in contemporary gay society in South Korea, but at the expense of paying into gay formulaic prescripts.

Questions arising from an attempt to understand homosexuality—whether it is natural or “abnormal”<sup>156</sup>—helped to fuel the controversy over *A Frozen Flower* (2008) set in the Goryeo Dynasty and based on the reign of Gongmin.<sup>157</sup> The movie depicts a homosexual relationship between the king and his bodyguard, which several scholars have argued did not in fact occur.<sup>158</sup> Regardless of the factual validity of its claims, the assertion that militaries that promote masculinity also engage in homosexual behavior caused a social uproar that the film unfairly represented history, while also bringing the subject of homosexuality and the military to the dinner table.

Beyond large-scale cinematic depictions of homosexuality, low budget commercials, dramas, and short films made for TV also became

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<sup>156</sup> Former South Korean President Lee myung park used the term weird or *esanghae* (이 상 해) to refer to gays.

<sup>157</sup> See cit. 31.

<sup>158</sup> <http://koreajoongangdaily.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2899646>

popular in the early 2000s.<sup>159</sup> Many of these media depictions of male-to-male amorous relations have led to a new culture of *coming out* that has gained support after several celebrities came out publicly to their viewing audiences.<sup>160</sup> However, the move toward politicizing *coming out* or *outing*<sup>161</sup> even amongst celebrities has led to controversy and public backlash. Ji-hoo Kim, a prominent celebrity, model, and actor who starred in the family sitcom *Unstoppable High Kick*, committed suicide after having *come out* on a reality TV show in 2008. As a result many, rightly so, see *coming out* as politically driven and media motivated.<sup>162</sup> Regardless, the growth of male-to-male sexual relations and the question of male sexual orientation and identity also extend beyond the silver screen.

In 1998, *Buddy*, South Korea's first gay magazine was published, but did not get a strong enough following and soon stopped publication.

However, the rise of *Boy's Love Comics* (BL Comics) or *yaoi manga* has

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<sup>159</sup> *Boy Meets Boy* (2008); *Coming Out* (2008); *Just Friends* (2009); *Love, 100 Degrees C* (2010); *Life is Beautiful* (2010); *Personal Preference* (2010)--though this TV series depicts a main character that pretends to be gay to get closer to a female.

<sup>160</sup> Hong Seok-cheon who in 2002 became the most prominent openly gay celebrity; Harisu, the first transgender singer/celebrity; Lady, the first transgender band in the country;

<sup>161</sup> Exposing the homosexuality of a prominent person.

<sup>162</sup> An addition factor to consider in the fallacy of the culture of coming out is its exclusive gay-oriented meaning. The question of whether coming out as such applies to other sexualities and as such one should wonder whether coming out truly represents a coming-to-terms with one's sexuality as it is typically presented with the case of self-proclaimed gays. Does, for example, coming out have the same significance when applied to lesbians, transsexual/ transgenders, and bisexuals?

further fueled interest in male same-sex relationships. These Japan-style comics often include imaginary sexual trysts and amorous relations between famous celebrities. Their popularity rose throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s and has since gained a large following in South Korea and that has even moved to the Internet. In addition, with a readership primarily consisting of teenage girls this imaginative set of male same-sex experimentation has led to several famous singers providing their followers with more contexts by passionately french kissing with their male band members on stage. Such displays of male-to-male behavior, despite raising the question of boundaries regarding sexuality, are still viewed as performative in nature more than as admittance of one's sexuality or identity.

In terms of discrimination, media has one definitive trait: it seldom provides hues of gray when talking about social issues. For the sheer reason that shock factor often works better on the silver screen than obscurity and complexity. When dealing with sexuality such simplicity often surrounds the characters who are pitted between a conflict of heterosexuality or homosexuality—a conflict that ultimately must be satisfied for the viewers. Bisexuality is presented as a form of immaturity (as mentioned above) rather than as a natural stable sexual identity. This is primarily because in

cinema sexuality requires codification in ways that audiences will be able to connect with the main character. Unfortunately, without a bisexual lifestyle in Korea, directors often opt to present bisexuals as people in a state of flux in which they must fight to work themselves out. In other words, bisexuality is not an option; it's an option in waiting.



#### **4. Sexual Identity, Citizenship, Law and Discrimination in the Military**

In 2007, when asked his views of homosexuals and gay marriages, the then-encumbent-President Lee Myung-Bak reportedly told media sources that “homosexuality is abnormal.”<sup>163</sup> It goes without saying that the discrimination law introduced by the Ministry of Justice reflects this tendency to rashly assess difference as equivalent to abnormality. The draft legislation first announced in 2 October 2007 had initially set out to protect people who had the potential of being discriminated against based on their sexual orientations<sup>164</sup>, however according to Democratic Labor Party official and news reports, “...the current version of the law was changed to exclude protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, military status, nationality, language, appearance, family type, ideology, criminal or detention record, and educational status.”<sup>165</sup> As can be imagined, this raises the issue of citizenship because it nullifies legal protection against mistreatment for all non-heterosexual Koreans living in the country. The highly desired legislation did two things: it solidified the gay camp, while also presenting a paradox in sexuality-oriented legislation.

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<sup>163</sup> United Nations Refugee Agency. 2009.

<http://www.refworld.org/topic,50ffbce4c9,50ffbce4fc,4b7cee8137,0,,,KOR.html>

<sup>164</sup> Korea Ministry of Government Legislation. 2007-106. Oct. 22.

<http://newlaw.moleg.go.kr/sub.html?idx=261>

<sup>165</sup> Human Rights Watch. 2007 Nov. 7. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2007/11/05/south-korea-anti-discrimination-bill-excludes-many>

The creation of legislation based solely on sexual identity could work counter to creating a non-discriminative environment by further politicizing sexual orientation as a matter merely of identity rather than one that also includes one's preferred tastes, behaviors, and problems. Behavior is not a matter of identity alone, or vice-versa. For this reason, it is quite understandable why the Korean government would have reservations about creating legislation without a clear understanding of how to define the subjects of those laws. Are, for example, "gays" a readily identifiable subject that could benefit from legal protection in South Korea? Does a self-identified "gay" need to be readily identifiable to deserve protection? And, in what ways would protection benefit them as citizens in the country?

Clearly, there are no clear-cut answers to any of the above questions, and they are also beyond the scope of this thesis. What is more important is how the connection between citizenship, military discrimination, and sexual behavior relate when attempting to address discrimination based on sexual orientation and sexual identity.

In the case of South Korea, attempts to rid society of discrimination have led to an upsurge in identity politics. The attention on discrimination and diversity has obscured the meanings of these identities in their own right. For this reason, it is no surprise that there has also been a resurgence

of sociological inquiries into the meaning of social identities. Han & Lee (2011), for example, found that the frequency of sociological studies that address identity amongst the top ten universities in South Korea went from 16.0 (N=801) between the years 2006-2007 to 38.0 (N=2,663), accounting for the highest frequency in terms of the top 20 topics<sup>166</sup> for masters and doctoral thesis from 2008-2010.<sup>167</sup> The inability to successfully determine the meanings of identities that are not wholly driven by a collective subjectivity makes coming up with legislation difficult even when such legislation is clearly needed.<sup>168</sup> However, this does not mean that the country has given up on the legal approach to protecting and even providing for its queer citizens.

In the military, the death of a soldier who committed suicide in July of 2003<sup>169</sup> after having been sexually tormented during his duty, for example, led to not only a need for legal provisions that dealt with sexual violence between men, but also led to further discrimination against homosexuals who were or will be in the military. According to Article 56 of the Military Penal Code, “perverted sexual orientations” were seen as cause

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<sup>166</sup> Kang, Jeonghan & Jemin Lee, “Sociological theories current place and prospects: 2004-2010 ‘Society and Theory’ Keyword Analysis.” A paper presented at the Korean Society for Social Theory’s 10-Year Anniversary Seminar on Korean Social Theory Remembrance & Prospect. 2011. Aug. 19. p. 67.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> See I (3) Sex Crimes, p. 29.

<sup>169</sup> Hankyoerh Newspaper. July 13, 2003. “An Investigation.”

for dishonorable discharge. In addition, Article 92 stipulated “sodomy (sexual acts between males) is punishable by up to one year in prison.” Both of these stipulations within the military were seen as means of maintaining discrimination against enlisted homosexuals. Soldiers who were caught in the act were punished for mutual sexual assault.

However, the criminality of nonconsensual sexual violence only became a legally enforced military crime in April 2006. However, discussion and protest for the legal consideration of men as possible sexual victims of rape by other men, not simply as subjects of sexual violence or assault, began as early as 1996.

Outside of the military, pressing charges for rape between men, rather than simply forced sexual assault, remains impossible. Such efforts to protect men from men have only gained leeway for male minors who were given the right to prosecute adult males for rape on 3 March 2012.<sup>170</sup> As will be shown in the next section, the issue of man-on-man rape is a problem that greatly affects transgenders.

An added difficulty comes from D. Lewis’s (2009) findings that sexual violence against men (even on the level of genocide), and crimes against humanity, or as war crimes “...often go under noticed, under

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<sup>170</sup> Munhwa Ilbo. 15. March. Society.  
<http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=2012031501030127104002&w=nv>

prosecuted, and, ultimately, under punished.”<sup>171</sup> This lack of recognition leads to false assumptions about its frequency and the nature of the crime, making it a highly contentious problem. However, it is not a dismissible issue. For example, Kwon et. al.’s (2007) study found that of 103 victims who had suffered from sexual violence in the South Korean military, 83.5% of the total respondents reported having been victims of sexual violence on two or more occasions, continuously and repeatedly.<sup>172</sup> It is also clear that this behavior is not driven merely by situation alone, and should be studied in terms of whether such violent sexual behavior continues outside of the confines of the barracked life.

Though attempts have been made to avoid the legal reproduction of queer discrimination has been avoided, the paradox of how best to protect queer minorities without any legislation at all remains a major problem that South Korea is currently grappling to solve. As will become clearer in the next section, consideration of bisexuals, transsexuals, as well as other fetish-loving “abnormal” sexual adults poses major problems with consideration of a queer inclusive country.

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<sup>171</sup> Lewis, D. A. “Unrecognized Victims: Sexual Violence Against Men in Conflicting Settings Under International Law.” *Wisconsin International Law Journal*. p. 1.

<sup>172</sup> Kwon, Insook, et. al. “Sexual Violence Among Men in the Military in South Korea.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 22:9, p. 1029.

## **5. Inter-Queer Discrimination: Transgender/ Transsexuals & Bisexuals**

The inclusion of sexualities that go beyond the hetero-homosexual paradigm causes a double-layered problem that both disrupts the cohesion of queer identities as a whole, and makes legal and political matters of identity difficult in South Korea. This is primarily because gender studies in the country are often predicated on feminist theories that center on power and post-colonialism—neither of which work in the case of male sexual minorities in a patriarchal society. The inclusion of transgenders and transsexuals into the queer rubric<sup>173</sup> is a case in point.

In South Korea, transgender / transsexuality had been studied primarily from a biological and medical approach with the intention of understanding how to address these sexual minorities from a legal point of view. The case of a male-to-female transgender who was raped in June 1996, for example, directed particular attention to the problem. In this regard, the legal tradition is to deal with gender based on the presumption of the explicit and exclusive existence of only two sexes (men and women). The law has always been based on two sexes, despite medical research that

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<sup>173</sup> For reasons that will be mentioned in the next section, the categorical fitting of sexual orientation differs in Korea truly is one that primarily comes down to a rubric construct in which generalized notions developed outside of Korea often obscure the distinct qualities of the sexual orientations that are being examined.

suggests that sexual dimorphism does not accurately encompass the full range of chromosomal disparities, i.e. intersex must be considered as a possible legal status. Extending the law to transgenders, what was then considered a third sexual identity was feared as the key to unlocking Pandora's box and opening legal recognition to any and every other sexuality. This preoccupation with medical appropriation for transgendered people, however, waned in 2000 with the arrival of a publicly open transgender celebrity who turned national attention away from biological murkiness to a genuine concern for the psychological welfare of transgenders (and transsexuals alike) as members in society and people who live a viable sexual identity in South Korea.<sup>174</sup> Prior to this time, transgendered individuals were marginalized within a strictly homosexual paradigm or not considered beyond the female gendered characteristics.

A lack of understanding and appreciation for transgendered individual's sexual development can be seen in both the paltry number of studies probing this area as well as by the portrayal of transsexuals and transgendered individuals as people living psychologically imbalanced lives as depicted in media. Instead of seeing the social pressures transsexuals and transgenders incur, as a particular matter of their sexual identities, society

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<sup>174</sup>See cit. 120.

often pegged/ pegs them as no different than sexually confused men who identify as gays and women who identify as lesbians. Otherwise, they are considered perverse, psychologically sick, suffering from childhood trauma, or otherwise simply dismissed as heterosexuals who are not in need of particular attention or protection and merely living performative lives. It is clear, however, that transsexuals and transgendered individuals have their own set of factors that, when combined, may present some patterned developmental paths of their sexual identity.<sup>175</sup>

Whereas transgender and transsexual identities have gained some attention in South Korea, bisexuality is only now beginning to spread as a sexual identity that individuals claim. But hampered by the overwhelming influence of Western assumptions, bisexuals are also coming under fire from the homo-heterosexual camps. Some claim that bisexuals do not exist, while others argue that bisexuality is a confused state of immaturity that requires choosing between gay or straight lifestyles. What is interesting is the difference that consideration of bisexuality will make in both political moves to liberate gays from the military or even in terms of whether South

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<sup>175</sup> See Jun-Woo Kim. 2008. Translation: "Gender Identity Formation according to the Experiences of Transgenders." 트랜스젠더의 경험을 통해 본 젠더 정체성 형성 과정. Seoul National Univeristy Graduate School Master's Thesis.



Korea should jump on the global bandwagon of considering male same-sex marriages or civil unions.

Considering the large number of self-identified “gay” men who are in relationships with women as a result of social pressures or in avoidance of financial risks<sup>176</sup>, identifying a self-proclaimed “gay” and applying a particular law regarding his or her military duties would present numerous difficulties if not prove impossible. Regardless, a bisexual individual would be further marginalized as a person who could not or should not benefit from his male-oriented tastes. Moreover, as will be presented below, it is questionable whether the gay gendered sexual orientation actually fits under the traditional schema of homosexual liberation when the gay lifestyle has yet to be understood from a strictly South Korean sexual identity developmental analysis with the consideration of possible bisexual identities and bisexual behavioral factors.

The marginalizing unilateral assertion that sexual minorities should fall within the precepts of Western notions of sexual orientation has caused both a neglect of anthropological and psychological studies in the development of alternative (both non-heterosexual and non-homosexual) sexual identities and lifestyles. This has and is clearly causing a social

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<sup>176</sup> See John (Song Pae) Cho. 2009 Spring. “The Wedding Banquet Revisited: ‘Contract Marriages’ between Korean Gays and Lesbians.” *Anthropology Quarterly*. Vol. 82. No. 2.

reproduction of sexuality-oriented discrimination in South Korea, one that is already problematic in Western countries.<sup>177</sup> This is not to say that (1) South Korea has little hope in eliminating or easing this reproduction, nor is it saying that (2) South Korea has nothing to offer in terms of understanding sexual behavior or sexual identity. Rather, as will be shown below, only by understanding sexual identity formation and its particular connections to sexual behavior in South Korea can a true understanding of the matters at work be used for policy implementation.

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<sup>177</sup> Kopelson, Karen. 2002 "Dis/Integrating the Gay/Queer Binary: 'Reconstructed Identity Politics' for a Performative Pedagogy." *National Council of Teachers of English*.

## 6. Summary

In summation, this chapter investigated the social factors that play roles in producing and reproducing discrimination against queers in South Korea. Using both secondary sources as well as information from the interviews conducted it made the following conclusions:

First, scholarship in South Korea creates a dichotomous paradigm of hetero-versus-homosexuality that reconstructs identity politics as a form of performative pedagogy. This generalized paradigm has produced an overwhelming social interest in homosexuality that is led predominantly by second-wave feminist scholars who focus on power and post-colonial thought. Scholarship on gay males also tends to add to the complexity of homosexuality, though usually without considering the existence of bisexuals and/or bisexuality.

Second, sexual identity and/or orientation-directed political movements often center on Western concepts of queer sexuality that stress gay ideals that are not necessarily representative of *gei* men in South Korea. As a result, they increase awareness of homosexuality without necessarily having the same impact in terms of increasing queer awareness as a whole. In effect, the political movements are performative and often ignore the issues that bisexuals may be facing in the country.

Third, media plays an essential role in educating people of sexual identity-based issues in the country, the main medium of which is movies. The spread of *Hallyu* led to an increased desire to increase global interest, which precipitated a more lax cinema regulative environment in terms of sexuality. As a result, awareness of homosexuality has increased. However, the nature of cinema has made bisexuality a non-option—instead creating the caricature of bisexuals as confused or immature. In addition, homosexuality in comics and a somewhat unsuccessful gay magazine has helped to increase awareness of homosexuality, whereas such awareness of bisexuality remains dormant. Thusfar, no current or past media in South Korea have promoted an interest in bisexuality.

And fourth, gays in the military have led to both consideration of legislation and heightened attention toward finding suicide preventive measures. However, legislation that privileges gays will ultimately have a paradoxical effect of marginalizing bisexuals both in the army as well as in the country.

## **VI. Bisexuality Identity and Performativity & its Influence on Queer Studies**

### **1. The Formation of Bisexuality and Its Meaning**

“The professionalization of gayness requires a certain performance and production of a ‘self’ which is the constituted effect of a discourse that nevertheless claims to ‘represent’ that self as a prior truth.”

-Judith Butler, 1989.<sup>178</sup>

Should sexual identity reflect sexual behavior? Are bisexuals simply pansexuals who are devoid of any political power as a minority group in South Korea? And what are the performative ascriptions (if any) that lead way to a bisexual identity in the country? In other words, what is a bisexual in the country?

#### *Retroactive Self-realization of Behavioral Negation*

What was found from the respondents was that bisexuality could play a role in the renegotiation of sexual identities in some respondents, while a behavioral exclusive descriptive for others. What was most interesting, however, is that for most who identified as homosexuals, bisexuality served less as a means of interpreting sexual behavior as it did for sexual-oriented relationship

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<sup>178</sup> Butler, Judith. 1993. “Imitation and Gender Insubordination.” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. Routledge.

fulfillment. However, for bisexuals sexual intimacy and relationship fulfillment matter most.

Before...I used to think this way before having a relationship with a man...even before having sex with a man...of course that's the way it is with society's prejudice. Even though I wanted to hook up with a girl, I didn't really want to have sex but if it happened it would likely be because I'd want a child...that is, after marriage. And I just think I enjoy having sex with guys I guess. [B1]

When asked why he had switched his sexual identification, the respondent insinuated that relationship fulfillment had played a major part. To him, relationship roles—perhaps even at the gendered level are important in terms of how one identifies himself sexually.

From that time I thought about it. But that time...the reason was at that time I was seeing a guy...so I had a person I was going out with...therefore, because I want to go out with a guy and I want to go out with a girl I think I'm bisexual. [B1]

Though he had initially considered himself gay, he felt it necessary to reassess his sexuality mid-interview, particularly after bisexuality was mentioned. In doing so, he made a clear distinction between the types of relationships that he had had with men and women. He went further to explain that his reason for not considering himself gay had to do with his feeling that the term 'gay' has to do with homosexual exclusivity.

The meaning of gay...I...gay looking from the point of sexuality means liking a guy....not liking a woman. (A guy liking a guy?) Right. And I have an older male friend who's just like that. He can't even stomach the idea of having intercourse with a girl. "For me the thought even makes me sick," he'd say. I think that kind of person is truly a gay...To be honest, I can't be certain as for me. This is because sleeping with a girl...having sex with a girl...I don't enjoy it. [B1]

In some ways, the problem of understanding the connection between sexual identity and behavior in South Korea comes down to the meaning of love, sex, and relationships. For B1, social precursors account for his living a bisexual life (as opposed to a double or even fluid one<sup>179</sup>) in which he finds both men and women sources for fulfilling different, yet complementary needs. However, he revealed a social stigma that he feels is a factor of his bisexual identity.

Sure {there are some shortcomings to being bisexual}. What I've been saying up until now...if you look at it as a whole...no matter how you look at it the shortcoming would have to be that society is not aware enough. I never really considered exactly where that shortcoming lies, but that's definitely the right term for it. Not a weakness, a shortcoming, I think...for example, ever since I was a freshman that's been one stress...because in our country heterosexual is the norm. That itself is thought to be so natural... "why don't you have a girlfriend?" and naturally, "Why's that" in this way...always pressing why you don't have a girlfriend...the culture is one that's always pushing and giving you stress like you have to make one. So "he has no girlfriend, what a weirdo. He's not normal." Because people look at you like

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<sup>179</sup> B1 admits that he truly is amorously attracted to women, but simply not for sex. As such, it would be wrong to judge that his desire for sexual intimacy for women somehow negates the reality of his life; he admits that his like of women does not necessarily conflict with his sexual feelings for his male companions.

this...for me I felt such an inferiority complex and it totally stressed me out. [B1]

This stress, the need to deal with others' perceptions that if one is not a homosexual then one must certainly be a heterosexual often causes bisexuals to lead somewhat masked existences, causing them to live performative heterosexual lives—lives that may not even help with reducing or combating stress.

More than easing the stress, I often try to change the way people around me think. I'd say "Hey, when there's a girl that it's going so well with." I always use this Korean style of creating a cover. Let's just say that I'd say that I have a girlfriend. In this way, probably kids would spread the rumor directly. (Don't you feel that that could lying?) That's kind of how it is. But, umm...but usually I do like that person. I don't know if you can call it love, but I really do...like the girl. The girl too...but because I've never tried sex before so it's not that kind of like. If I do, well...I don't think that it will really get me going. [B3]

For the bisexuals included in this study, relationship fulfillment and even relationship labeling served as an important factor in how they perceived their own sexuality. Rather than simply talking about the men with whom they have slept as sex objects, they were more prone to attach relationship titles to their sexual partners.

Yes, in high school I had a boyfriend...the first guy that I had sex with. (And did you have a girlfriend at the time?) No. But that friend was kind of bisexual. Because he used to say that he was bisexual because when he was younger he had an experience with a girlfriend and...he didn't do her...they just kissed...that's all he said he did. [B1]



It is important to stress, that for this particular respondent as for the other bisexuals, affixing titles rather than simply relying on sexual behavior accounted for sexual identity.

This view that one's sexual identity is tied to intimacy and relationship fulfillment was further affirmed by men who identify as homosexuals or gay. However, such relationships and intimacies did not negate our homosexual respondents' view of their own sexualities. Take for example, G2, who had claimed to have sexual relationships with both men and women, but in the absence of intimacy with the later.<sup>180</sup> To the question of whether he had a boy or girlfriend he gave the following response:

Yes. I've had a relationship with a boyfriend, and I've had a relationship with a girlfriend. (Did you have a girlfriend simultaneously? Yes. (Did your girlfriend know?) No she didn't. (Did your boyfriend know?) Yes, the guy knew. [G2]

Regardless of the relationships he claimed to have had, and after having admitted that bisexuality exists, and when posed with the question of whether he felt himself "totally gay," his response insinuates that intimacy and relationship fulfillment define his sexual identification choice more than his sexual behavior.

Umm....not 100% {gay}. Maybe 60...70...yeah well...50:50 I think...I guess you could see it as bi...just when I'm with a girl it's just for

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<sup>180</sup> See p. 89.

psychological reasons...yeah...when I'm with a guy...yeah...it's just physical...like that...[G2]

In this case, as with the one preceding it, the production of male sexual identity is defined in terms of its relation to gender (i.e. whether one's partner is male or female) but one that goes beyond simple notions of sexual behavior as constituting sexual identity. The need for social companionship that can only be filled by a person of the opposite sex, even for Korean *gei* men gives added context to Cho's (2013) "bats" presented above.<sup>181</sup>

Most representative of the opposite extreme was the views of H2, the second heterosexual participant, who took sexual identity as intrinsically tied less to intimacy and relationship fulfillment than to sexual desire, stigmatized social necessity, and concepts of biological propensity.

Um...to feel {bisexuality is} a sexual attraction to both men and women, no?" (Can you be a bit more specific?) Well. For gays, usually a person would feel horny when meaning a man. That person would want to have sexual relations with that man, I think. Just some kind of physical think you can say. But for a bisexual, in the same way when meeting a man they feel sexual attraction and when meeting a girl they feel the same kind of attraction.<sup>182</sup> [H2]

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<sup>181</sup> See Chapter III, Sec. 1 (4) above. p. 65.

<sup>182</sup> Respondent H3 used the specific terms "attraction" & "horny" in his explanation to the question "what is bisexuality?"

Though he provides an analysis of bisexuality as a product of internal desire and attraction, when asked whether he has ever met a bisexual he immediately turns bisexuality into a homosexual tool or decoy.

No. I've never met one {a bisexual}. However, there seems to be more and more gay people who are acting gay...there are people who go out meeting girls to hide that they're gay. (You don't think such a person is bisexual?) No, I don't think so. [H2]

The lack of accepting a bisexual identity as a true expression of one's sexual preference or orientation would seem to belittle bisexuality as something that is acquired, something that would not necessarily tie directly to one's biological propensity, which was mentioned above. However, that does not seem to be the case. Sexual orientation—not necessarily identity—is something that is likely an innate component of one's identity.

Well, for me I think it's natural {to be a heterosexual}. (What about gays?) In terms of gays, isn't it also natural to them? I think that for gays liking men is also something they're born with. (And bisexuals?) Is bisexuality something someone is born with?..... I think it's something they're born with. [H2]

Significantly our respondent took a much longer time to consider bisexuality as a sexual orientation that could be from birth. This could be primarily caused by the need to negotiate a sexual identity, see it as a sexual orientation. However, what became clear in the interviews is that when asked whether the non-bisexual respondents had ever met a bisexual, which

requires taking sexual orientation to the sexual lifestyle level, they automatically either answered in the negative or would reply that they would likely be "...a mixture between like a man and like a woman..." as H5 did above.<sup>183</sup>

Regardless of the vastly different impressions for what accounts for bisexuality, every respondent said that bisexuality exists in South Korea and also that it is a common sexual identity in the country. And while some regarded bisexuality as a consequence of sexual behavioral patterns, none of the respondents linked those same patterns with their own same and/ or opposite-sex relations. Additionally, amongst four of the heterosexual respondents, bisexuality could be perceived as a decoy—whereby a man would seek female companionship to hide his true gay identity.

No. I've never met one {a bisexual}. However, a gay guy who...there are a few people who pretend to be bisexual. (Why do you think so?) There are gays hiding their identities by meeting girls and they become that way. (But why don't you think they could still be bisexual?) No, I don't think they are. [H3]

Aside from both affirming the existence of bisexuality as a possible sexual identity, the respondents also showed that there is a somewhat unclear delineation between the idea of whether identity is based on sexual behavior, sexual desire, intimacy, psychological relationship fulfillment,

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<sup>183</sup> See p. 83.

stigmatized social necessity, or biological propensity in South Korea.

However, what is clear is that the heterosexual participants interpreted and admitted that bisexuality, at least on the outside, looks like a normalized decoy for closeted homosexuals (though they seldom referred to it outside of the sexual behavioral contexts).

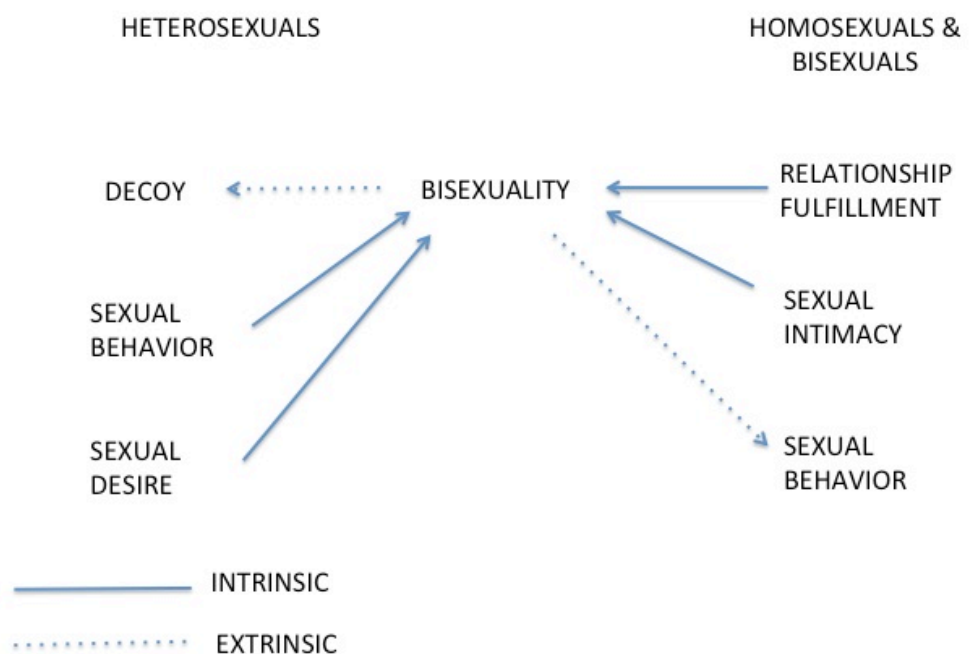


FIGURE 1: Interpretation of “bisexuality” according to heterosexuals, homosexuals, and bisexuals interview responses

The above diagram shows the interpretation of bisexuality based on the participants interviewed. In the case of heterosexuals, emphasis was

placed on sexual behavior and sexual desire as factors used to define bisexuality. However, sexual desire seemed to outweigh sexual behavior in their responses; the two in combination seemed to constitute bisexuality. In the case of self-identified homosexuals, bisexuality was primarily a matter of one's need for certain types of relationship fulfillments and sexual intimacy. In other words, bisexuality was a reflective identity that was in part caused by a person's relationships. However, these relationships would ultimately dictate one's sexual behavior according to the homosexuals & bisexuals interviewed, whereas it led to the construct of a decoy for hiding one's sexual orientation according to the heterosexuals who participated in the study.

Though these findings are far from conclusive, they do offer a suggestive understanding of how bisexuality is interpreted in South Korea based on the participants in this study.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> I'd like to point out that this analysis seems to re-establish the binary perception that heterosexual and homosexual/ bisexual ways of thinking. However, this may be the result of a world based primarily on heteronormativity as well as on the need for a larger sample pool, which would likely show more interpretive diversity. These findings as mentioned above should be seen less as a sample pool of society and more as proof of the existence of bisexuality and the possible role it may play in queer studies and the dynamics of South Korean queer culture.

## 2. The Meaning of Sex Behavior & Sexual Identity

“Sex and Space cannot be ‘decoupled.’”<sup>185</sup> Johnston and Longhurst’s (2010) recent book on eroticized topographies, *Space, Place, and Sex* detailed the contrasting role of sexual behavior from the perspective of homosexuals and bisexuals in contrast to those of heterosexuals. And although I set out to avoid polemicizing the issue of bisexuality, this difference is in part the result of the prevailing standards in the meaning of sex—a standard that is arguably based less on Western morality or sexual essentialism than on personal rationalizations of what accounts for sexual versus non-sexual expressions of intimacy.

Perhaps the most interesting expression of where heterosexual identity is not decoupled by sexual behavior was in the case of H2, who found difficulty in placing why he has had frequent sexual encounters with men but insists that such interactions do not dictate his sexual identity. When asked whether he enjoyed the sexual activities he has had with men, he quickly affirmed. However, he had difficulties in explaining why he felt that it was not part of his sexual identity.

Uh....what I wanted....one time....just...well...having become so close...like...uh...but like...I want to have sex....that kind of feeling was

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<sup>185</sup> Johnston, Lynda & Longhurst, Robyn. 2010. *Space, Place, and Sex: Geographies of Sexualities*. Rowman & Littlefield. p. 3.

totally absent...just like...with him...just...I wanted to be closer, it was just kind of like that feeling. [H2]

Nothing definitive can be said of this particular statement, but when notions of relationship fulfillment or sexual intimacy become issues, as a self-professed heterosexual, it seems necessary to renegotiate sexual identity and reinterpret how sexual behavior connects to it. When asked the meaning of sex and particularly what sex means, there was a tendency even amongst all of the heterosexuals to see sex as a “joke” or a “fun” activity that was seen as separate from identity—behavior void of pre-desire or fantasy. As such, they often referred to their actions as “play.”<sup>186</sup>

In addition, the boundaries of what constitute sex seemed to play major roles in how the respondents determined their sexual identities. When asked what sex means to them, and whether they believed that kissing, touching one another’s genitals, mutual (non-contact) masturbation, or fellatio would constitute as sex, they all seemed to have very different views. And based on these views, there is a clear tendency to negotiate the significance or presence of feelings of sexual intimacy.

Do I think that touching {another person’s genitals} is sex?  
That...well...you have to have insertion for it to be sex, that’s what sex is. That’s the notion I have of it. (Have you perhaps ever had oral sex

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<sup>186</sup> The phrase *kenyang norgo isseo seyo* (그냥 놀고 있었어요), or I was just playing, was repeated more than ten times by all the heterosexual participants who admitted having had man-to-man sexual relations.



with a man?) Yeah, I've tried just for fun. (For fun?) I didn't think much of it...it wasn't a big deal...but well let's say if...as I just explained...after drinking alcohol...not liking the guy...well...just...well....just....well...just...well...how about this....like that? Just thinking sort of like that. So, not thinking it's so deep. That act well...I'm not thinking oh I have to do this...it's just oh well I did this...I without thinking so much about it. Like that. (So usually when you have oral sex it happens in this way?) I haven't done it often. When I was drinking, just for fun...I did it, it seems, after having drunken alcohol. (And you're on the receiving end?) Yes. (And have you had oral sex without having drunken alcohol?) Yes, that's right. (Do you think that behavior is bisexual?) It's not. As I already said. It's just like I just explained. What I've already said is really my answer. Ha ha. (But isn't oral sex something that's not done between people who don't love one another?) It's not an act as such...is not the right idea...it's as I already said. What...even sex...socially now one-night stands...like...people do that too. If you have a one-night stand you can't say that's an act between lovers. But like I got a blowjob and then connect that to love...that's not logical. [H2]

In this excerpt, H2 initially describes his experiences in terms of intimacy.<sup>187</sup> In the excerpt above, he provides two separate explanations of his sexual behavior. The first is the claim that alcohol made him do it, which he later retracts as his main reason for his repeated same-sex sexual acts. The second appears connected to the idea of sexual deviance as a means of having fun. What is of note is that he begins by focusing specifically on the relationship that he shares with his partner. He internalizes his behavior

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<sup>187</sup> It should be noted, as explained earlier, unlike the other participants, H2 also admits to having joined a gay-oriented SNS application that specializes in hook-ups or one-night stands.

during the discussion from matters of intimacy to conditional bisexuality<sup>188</sup> to sexual deviance, and finally to one devoid of amorous feelings (negating his original premise of intimacy). Oral sex and intercourse have little or nothing to do with love for him—a thought that is not entirely uncommon even in the West.<sup>189</sup> His same-sex behaviors are not fueled by sexual desire, so the possibility of being a bisexual for him is impossible.

Some could claim that he is in denial. However, this would unfairly subject his identity choice to the mistaken assumption that sexual identities are in fact culturally universal, while also denying him agency. Throughout the interview, H2 asserted that his idea of sex must include anal or vaginal insertion with the penis—not simply an erotic act that includes the penis.

In another case, it became clear that the boundaries of sex are not necessarily merely those created by the presence or absence of erotic penile stimulation.

Have you ever perhaps watched a porno video with your friends?

Many, a long time ago. (Together?) Yes.  
Did you ever masturbate together with them?

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<sup>188</sup> By conditional bisexuality I mean the mental state of the person, e.g. alcohol in this case, this contrasts with situational bisexuality that is often seen in cases such as heterosexual men engaging in sexual relations in the military, as mentioned above.

<sup>189</sup> René Descartes, for example, created the Cartesian division and subordination of the body to the mind. The body was simply a machine, like a car, but driven by intellect and spirituality. See Colie, Rosalie L. (1957). *Light and Enlightenment*. Cambridge University Press.

Yes I've done that too. And we even played games while doing it. To put it more concretely...to see who could shoot the fastest or have the more sperm.

Would you say that masturbating with your friends is a sexual act?

I don't think that's a sexual act at all.

What would you say is the meaning of a sexual act?

Well, it's not what one does alone. With another person and doing something while horny is a sex act. For example...well, masturbating with a partner or foreplay would be a sexual act.

So even touching would be a sexual act?

Yes. Well...well...just making out in a public place, you can't call that a sexual act. However, in an enclosed condition, for example, in a room...touching one another there in the room and feeling horny would be a sexual act.

So when you were masturbating with your friends in middle school you were in a room and people didn't know right? You don't think that was a sexual act?

No. Those friends didn't touch me. I did it on my own. And in there, hmm...during that act we're horny sexually, but...I'm unclear about...in that room...we had that feeling...but with some partner?...you have to have had that feeling (of a partner) that's an extremely important factor. So we just were horny. It was only that. And by myself...and since we all each did it by ourselves that can't be considered a sexual act. And even more important is that if there was a girl present we'd pulled in however you look at it that would be a sexual act, but with just guys I don't think that's like a sexual act.

But, let's say that one of the friends happened to be gay and you didn't know it...couldn't that person have had the feeling that it was a sexual act?

Yes, I guess that guy could see it as a sexual act, no?

But you think that your behavior wasn't a sexual act regardless?

Yes, I don't think it's possible to say that it was a sexual act. [H3]

This portion of H3's interview brings to light the significance and necessity of considering culture when differentiating private from public, especially when it comes to defining a sexual act. Not doing so, brings

meaning to Terrie Goldie's observations that there is a tendency of seeing Western—namely American—constructs of sexuality as universal:

'Postcolonial' is now a body of literature in the American academy, replacing a quite minor category called 'Third World'. As this homology has spread, like so many Americanisms spread, there is no room left for any cultures which might be post-colonial but are not 'third world', 'developing', or whatever is the latest euphemism for the poor and racially other (in the perception of the west).<sup>190</sup>

In this short exchange with H3 above, the meaning of sex and sexual acts differs starkly from Western interpretations of a sexual acts as any that include the combination of arousal and genitalia. In the case of South Korea, sexual acts are not always defined by one's sexual organs, orgasm, or even in terms of the sexual orientation of the participants. Yet, for this respondent gender, i.e. the presence of the opposite sex, would automatically constitute the same behavior as a sexual act. This exchange is especially interesting when one considers non-heterosexual male orientations and the meaning of sex. According to H3, in this case, a sexual act requires the subjective internalization of the situation and context of which the act was done, which does not necessarily require the perceptions or consideration of the individuals or parties involved. This begs the question of what such acts

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<sup>190</sup> Goldie, T. (1999). "Introduction: queerly postcolonial". *ARIEL: A Review of International aEnglish Literature*. 30: 2. pp. 9-26.

mean in the presence of queers who may or may not be readily identifiable by gendered attributes alone.

Even for our conservative heterosexual participant, the question of what constitutes a sexual act, led to problems in terms of the boundaries and significance of behavior and whether those behaviors could be considered sexual.

Can you clearly explain the meaning of sexual intercourse or a sexual relationship?

Dictionary-wise? (No..not necessarily) Oh my thinking? (Yes.) Simply well...beyond just connecting....that....how should I say this....the psychological relief so to speak...you have to have that relationship in my opinion.

And would kissing or pecking on the cheek be a sexual act?

Umm...let's see...I think that would be different but...yes...no no...yes. Would you say that two people masturbating at the same time together is a sexual act?

Let's see...I don't see it as so. Yes, no...no.

Would directly touching someone's sexual organs with your hand be a sexual act?

No. I don't think so...no.

Have you ever masturbated with your friends?

Ha ha...no.

If you did would you call that a sexual act?

A sexual act? Well...I think it's different. I think that Koreans are pretty conservative. So even if one wouldn't see it as a sexual act, I think they'd be against doing it, no? So me....that's why I've never done such a thing with friends. But I don't think that would be a sexual act. [H4]

This difficulty in defining the meaning of sex is not limited to sexual extremes such as whether oral sex between men would constitute a sex act or not. Kissing or pecking with the lips on the cheek presents some

difficulties in interpreting the meaning of the act. And as seen in the conversation with G1 below, this difficulty in defining a sexual act is not simply caused by how one's sexual identity. Notice the stark difference in responses to similar questions of both G1 and G2 below:

What would you say is intercourse?

When the private parts of two people interact....like that...

Would you say that kissing or pecking on the cheek is a sexual act?

Yes, it is.

Would you say that two people masturbating at the same time together is a sexual act?

Yes, I think that too is right. (Even if they don't touch one another?)

No, not if they don't touch one another.

So directly touching someone's sexual organs with your hand is a sexual act?

Well, of course.

So of all the sexual acts I've asked. Would you say that they're all the same?

In terms of the act itself, they're different...but the meanings are all exactly the same I think. [G1]

Yet when posed the same question the answer was starkly different for another self-identified gay.

Would you say that kissing or pecking on the cheek is a sexual act?

No.

Would you say that two people masturbating at the same time together is a sexual act?

No.

Would directly touching someone's sexual organs with your hand be a sexual act?

Hmmm....yes, that's a sexual act. [G2]

One bisexual, B3, seemed to link H2's Cartesian split to the importance of his sexual desires—neither of which fit the typical model of

bisexual interpretation that came out of the other interviews related to direct interpretation of bisexuality.

What is the meaning of sexual intercourse?

Sexual intercourse, this is only well...at least what I think of course. I know that it has many different meanings. I think I like oral sex more. And if you ask what is sexual intercourse what kind of answer should I give? Hmm....Whatever one wants something like that. With sexual intercourse generally people think that it's something between and man and a woman, when a man and a woman are in love. The process of sharing love when in love. It seems this is what is often said...but I think it may be like that but not necessarily so. It's just a kind of enjoyment...so I like doing one-night stands... it's just for the simple purpose of sex...having sex and then moving on. Therefore, I think I've done that more than others but until now I haven't done it that much, maybe three times. [B3]

What does this confusion tell us? For one, it seems safe to say that for our participants the meaning and significance of a sexual act differs from those of Western interpretations, which are primarily based on biological, moral, and sexual essentialists prescripts. And second, it leads to a need to question the foundations upon which queer sexualities form and matter in the case of South Korea.

The definition of sex is essential in understanding bisexuality primarily because heterosexuals see sex (regardless of their personal interpretations of it) as matters of behavior and desire, whereas bisexuals and homosexuals see it as specifically tied to ones emotional-driven relationships and need for intimacy (which may not necessarily include sex).

As a result, many of the respondents who asserted their sexual-oriented gay exclusivity did not feel the need to reinvent themselves despite their opposite-sex relations. Essentially they admitted that sexual intimacy or relationship fulfillment was absent in such relationships—or vice-versa depending on which they value most in terms of their sexual identity. Their reasoning is that sex is less important in overall sexual identity.

In addition, heterosexuals who also admit to having sexual relations with other men feel that they are not bisexuals because these heterosexuals believe that sexual desire is most important when it comes to one's sexual self and / or selves.<sup>191</sup> For them, even though the sex may be “fun,” without the pointed sexual pre-desire or fantasies to engage in it, i.e. if it is bi-situational, it does not constitute a bisexual identity. Moreover, according to the heterosexuals involved what even constitutes a sexual act has everything to do with the actor and nothing at all to do with the receiver/ viewer of that act, thus making mutual masturbation a plutonic action that can take place with other men present and without a sexual connotation in and of itself.

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<sup>191</sup> There are some queers who assert having more than one sexuality or sexual identity, c.f. pansexuality & polysexuality.



### 3. Bisexual Existentialism and Queer Studies

Throughout this thesis I have emphasized the dangers of placing the formation of sexual identities in South Korea both within the interpretive position of linear evolution based on concepts of Western modernity as well as within a conceptual framework that they are universal or even cross-comparable. This is, however, the unfortunate trend with the current-day South Korean gay movement in the country. Despite the running mantra of others in opposition (Butler, 1990; Gopinath, 1996; Holton, 1998; Goldie, 1999; Hoad, 2000), the general tendency is to believe that modernizing trajectories abroad should and are forming in like ways domestically. Queer scholarship, as pointed out above, is a quickly growing field in South Korea—a field that does not always consider the domestic particularity of the surrounding trajectories. Is a *gei* really a gay? Or as Altman (1996) critically pointed out:

The basic question in these developments suggest a fundamental change equivalent to the creation of powerful gay communities with economic, social, and political clout as in North America, Australasia and northern Europe. Is there, in other words, a universal gay identity linked to modernity? This is not to argue for the transhistoric or essentialist position...but rather to question the extent to which the forces

of globalization...can be said to produce a common consciousness and identity based on homosexuality.<sup>192</sup>

As can be ascertained from the above, the development of articulations of sexual identities may linguistically rely heavily on adoption of similar queer terminologies, however the factors that account for those identities are not universal. This nuance in meanings leads to problems of using Western methodologies to study and promote those identities. This is especially the case in which accepted umbrella ideologies such as human rights and nuanced identities such as “gay” become issues that extend even transnationally, which could both pose a danger not only of South Korea’s domestic integrity<sup>193</sup> but also threatens to condense such identities into malformed, mismatched, and inappropriate ways.

It seems that while the US, which is a strong influence both in media and academia in the country, currently battles with deconstructing the hetero-homosexual dichotomy, South Korea is vigorously erecting it. Yet, while the dynamics of identity politics have taken root, the queer combatants are still in negotiation in terms of how to define themselves and

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<sup>192</sup> Altman, D. 1996. “Rupture and Continuity: The Internationalization of Gay Identities”. *Social Text*. 14:3. pp. 77-94.

<sup>193</sup> On 15 July 2009, for example, Kim Kyung-hwan (30), was granted refugee status after he objected to the mandatory military service in his home country for “...being a pacifist and a homosexual.”  
<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2011/12/15/12/0301000000AEN20111215002400315F.HTML>

in what ways these definitions will adequately account for addressing the social factors with which they must deal, including fulfilling traditional patriarchal duties, avoiding risks, asserting sexual individualism, acting as agents of identity, and so on.

The existence of bisexuals fundamentally changes both the meaning of *gei* in South Korea and creates a new need to re-assess studies regarding how discrimination against *geis* in particular in Korea is being handled. In particular, the rise of the anti-homophobia agenda not only leads to added pressures on self-identified bisexualities but also further marginalizes their existence in the queer sub-culture—an existence whose origins are neither exclusively exogenous nor indigenous to the country. And unfortunately, their existence is becoming more and more intrinsically tied to the hetero-homosexual paradigm—even though, as illustrated earlier, bisexuality in South Korea is not necessarily linked to either heterosexuality or homosexuality. Rather, bisexuality according to the study conducted here, is tied to relationship fulfillment and sexual intimacy, which may differ from the case of heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Taking the case of Indonesia and the universalization of the homosexual closet, for example, Boellstorff makes the following point that can also apply to the South Korean case:

Lesbi [sic.] and gay Indonesians are open not to the whole universe but to the gay world; confessing to other worlds in society is irrelevant. We find not an epistemology of the closet but an epistemology of life world, where healthy subjectivity depends not on integrating diverse domains of life and have a united, unchanging identity in all situations but on separating domains of life, and maintaining their borders against the threat of gossip and discovery.<sup>194</sup>

Yet, even in South Korea the meaning of diversity has taken root in the heterosexual world as a means through which dialogue and route imitation of Western mechanics alone can lead to fundamental change in the plight that queers face in the country.<sup>195</sup> However, the means by which South Koreans conceptualize sex must be taken into consideration before rashly setting out on the belief that sexual performativity is in fact proof of the universalization of queer gendering. In the case of South Korea, the taboo on sex that is only beginning to lift played a large role in why the participants in this study had to resort to other outlets such as the Internet, SNS applications, or even first-hand experimentation. This has made connecting the loosely defined sexual act with such important ideas as sexual orientation and sexual disease, and sex itself as external to a person's personality, orientation, and even agency.

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<sup>194</sup> Boellstorff, T. 1999. "The Perfect path: gay men, marriage, Indonesia". *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. 5:4. pp. 475-510.

<sup>195</sup> See II (3) above. Ji-hoo Kim.

When you were in middle school and high school, were you educated in school on the meaning of sex?

In middle school, in terms of sex education I got some, but I don't remember even one thing. And even if I did receive some, I didn't get that much...and in high school, I didn't get any education at all about that.

If perhaps you were educated on sex was most of the information about diseases?

Well...I heard about AIDS that and well....you have to use a condom...I think I heard about that. To be honest, I don't remember anything that I may have received from middle school. And nothing was ever really deep...I don't remember anything from sex education it seems. But I'm sure I was educated on it in middle school but I don't remember anything concretely...not one thing.

So do you think it would have been good to get sex education in high school?

No...on a conscious...well...I didn't that I really wanted to get such want to receive that kind of education. I just didn't feel it's necessary.

How about now?

Even now I'm not really feeling it. It's just about what one thinks fits oneself...sex education? Is it really so necessary? But to think of it...well...with all the criminal behavior on the rise...maybe if they got such an education it wouldn't happen so much. I guess I feel like that.  
[H2]

What became clear during this exchange is that education of sex per se takes place in middle school, for this respondent—as claimed by *all* the participants—sex education is given at such a young age that it fails at teaching its importance in later years. Though sex education is now a part of many high schools even in 2009 there was much opposition from school administrators who saw the idea as creating sexual ideation in youth.

However, several incidence of rape have made it a new item on the school agenda in terms of whether it should be taught in high schools.<sup>196</sup>

How did you first learn about sex?

What can I say? Hmm...that I watched videos with my friends?

Pornography? I guess it's from this things I guess you could say.

And where did you do these things?

The Internet...(Where specifically?) At school. In the school. On the school computer in the class room during break time.

So was it just one time or something that you did often?

Oh...well at that time I was just really curious. At that age, students would finish classes and were pretty bored...so...when the teacher wasn't looking we'd peek at it. We did it often...because we were often really curious at that age.

Do you think this type of media played a role in influencing your sexual identity?

Yeah, there's no way it could have not influenced me...regardless...

Would you say that this media was the first step toward your sexual identity.

Yes.

Were you educated on sex in school or at church?

At school I learned it, but to be honest thinks you learn at school are just....they just explain things but I didn't understand anything they were talking about. That is until I saw a video. [G1]

This was also a common trait among the participants. The first and often only source of learning about sex—rather than simply things related to sex—was through the Internet, often with friends, and in school or in one's own home. It was not an activity that was seen as something that should be done in private, *nor was* it done in private. Nearly all of the respondents admitted that porn was a group activity—not necessarily by choice—during

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<sup>196</sup> Korea Joongang Daily. "Breaking the Taboo: Sex Education in the Spotlight" 02 December 2009.

their youth. One respondent (H3 above) claimed that most porn videos were in CD form and often required using a friend's or a public computer to watch. This ended up causing him to watch it with others.

Can you tell me when you first started to receive sex education?

Probably starting in middle school, I think. But to be honest, it wasn't very helpful.

What part? Can you explain a bit more?

Most of the contents were things that I already knew...uh...me at that time...I'm not sure if it's different now, but when I was educated at that time they strongly stressed remaining pure until marriage. And stuff about psychological communion between people...things that at such a young age was just too difficult to understand, and the materials were kind of conservative really. Yeah...it was just the excitement of saying you're receiving sex education, but beyond that it was meaningless. [G3]

This respondent is 25 years old, which would have made him a student educated during the purity campaign waged in 1996.<sup>197</sup>

Did you every receive sex education at school?

In terms of sex education I don't know if I can say that it was either good or bad, but in high school I didn't get any sex education. Ah! There was some, but during that time people just used the time to study what they wanted. In middle school, there was a lot..but during that time stuff about gays was or opinions on that kind of stuff.

So what was it about?

Just how a man and a woman can make a baby. And how one should can show good manners and treat a girl. And contraceptives. Explanations were mostly about this stuff. There was nothing particularly different.

What about HIV?

Yeah AIDS and STD related stuff. But we learned more about that stuff in biology. And in health we'd learn that this or that disease exist. These are the symptoms. That's how we learned.

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<sup>197</sup> See Chapter III Sec. 1 above.

So you learned what the symptoms looked like?

What it looked like...I think they explained that too. But I don't think anything was ever mentioned about gays. [B3]

The meaning of sex education is also important to consider when dealing with the issue of sexual identity. In this case, the effectiveness of that education is always a factor in understanding behavioral effects as well. What is most interesting about the response of this participant is the experience, which he explains he had at the time of which he was receiving his education that he says stressed protective sex and precautionary STD-related information:

Would you say that both receiving oral sex and giving oral sex are the same? Do you only choose one over the other? Receiving or giving?

As for oral sex, both. But I guess I prefer to receive more than giving. Especially...is it ok if I be explicit? (Sure.) Swallowing sperm is something that I especially hate. When someone forces that it really pisses me off. This is what caused problems with the guy who was my first. He'd always pressure me to swallow and I hated it. [B3]

It is unclear from the response whether the respondent ever swallowed or whether his teachings on STDs were the reason for his refusal. However, though he admits to having had oral sex without a condom, he responded that he had never had unprotected sex.<sup>198</sup>

Did you ever happen to receive sex education?

I didn't get any sex education as part of any curriculum. Just at school the teacher would explain pregnancies happen. What a guy's sex

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<sup>198</sup> See Table 1, p. 50 above.



organ is like and what a girl's sex organ is like...just stuff like that... and well...what part makes a girl horny. And how to prevent pregnancy. Contraceptives. But how sexual relations form...for example...like having sex with someone you love will increase one's satisfaction. I never received any education like that. [H3]

What kind of things did you learn in regarding sex in school?

To be honest...in Korea subjective stuff...well concrete stuff...um...not just stuff about how a baby is born. We learn about how to avoid and prevent certain sexual criminals...preventive education you could say. So like don't follow a stranger that gives you candy...stuff like this...we only get stuff from that kind of simple preventive dimension. So it's not about how I should directly act...that kind of stuff. [H4]

Clearly, sex education in South Korea is still conservative in that education regarding sexual orientation or sexual identity remains largely absent from the classroom. In the 2012 debates for Ministry of Education, the current superintendent, when confronted with the issue of including sexual orientation in high school education to promote equality and human rights, responded with "In school saying that such things (homosexuality) are wrong and must be removed and even with the power to teach such things isn't right."<sup>199</sup> However, there is no evidence, nor does this comment suggest, that education on sexual orientation will be added to the curriculum in South Korea. This added with the recent ban on several media outlets

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<sup>199</sup>*Cham Saesang News*: "Seoul City Education Superintendent Debates, Human Rights or Ordinance: A 1:4 Battle" 2012 Dec. 12.  
[http://www.newscham.net/news/view.php?board=news&nid=68562&fb\\_action\\_ids=10152333144100142&fb\\_action\\_types=og.likes&fb\\_source=aggregation&fb\\_aggregation\\_id=246965925417366](http://www.newscham.net/news/view.php?board=news&nid=68562&fb_action_ids=10152333144100142&fb_action_types=og.likes&fb_source=aggregation&fb_aggregation_id=246965925417366)

about sex serves as a harbinger of the difficulties youth will have in exploring sexuality while also promoting less conventional and perhaps even illegal methods of doing so.

It is also interesting to note that though there are many writings on the importance of family in South Korea, writings that usually emphasize the country's Confucian past, sex seems to fall outside the purview of the traditional family-oriented construct. Though only a small sample, the respondents all stated that they received all of their meaningful sex education from personal experimentation and with Internet and/ or technology-based resources; no one mentioned family as a source of any sex-related teachings.

What is additionally important is that queer studies should have some impact on society. However, due to this conservative nature of education many young South Koreans who are investigating their own sexualities are deprived of resources that could give a balanced view of the many sexual identities and orientation that they may be on the course of realizing.

Writing particularly on the case of Western queer youth cultural, Susan Driver (2008) finds that “queer youth become intelligible through the details of what they say, how they do things...the point is not to ask ‘who and what are queer youth’ but rather to consider ‘how do young people forge personal

and collective representations that address their immediate conditions and elaborate enriching visions?""<sup>200</sup> This is a question that also affects the youth of South Korea and could play a large role in coming to a clearer understanding of how queer sexual identities are formed in the country. It could also help to better prepare and deal with discrimination and its formation, which brings us to reinterpreting and reassessing the properties that lead to minority inter-relational discrimination.

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<sup>200</sup> Susan Driver. (2008) *Queer Youth Cultures*. State University of New York Press. p. 19.

#### 4. Bisexual v. Queer Discrimination--Revisited

The political gambit caused by the attention paid to sexual identity in South Korea is leading to an unnecessary marginalization of queer identities that does not nestle well within the hetero-homosexual normative paradigm. However, more importantly a genuine appreciation of what constitutes the sexualities that truly make up this bipolar construct is essential to understanding the problems that all sexually marginalized agents face. Though queer studies are on the road to deconstructionism of monomythical sexual constructs, it is also necessary that the field consider its own deconstruction (i.e. promoting cross-sexuality studies) as a means of developing and understanding sexuality.

Perhaps what is most queer about queer studies is the overwhelming stabilization process that is created to maintain itself. This stabilization is seen in both South Korean education and also in its society. While gay studies have built a strong following in the country and also a genuine interest, the nomadic beginnings regarding sex and its meanings have taken a backseat on a high-speed detour led primarily by feminism and second-wave feminists in the country. Instead of seeking to understand sexual differences, humans have altogether become *subjects* in almost perfect Foucaultian identity formation, by which "...a subject is subject to someone

else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscious or self-knowledge.”<sup>201</sup> The idea that gendering is fundamental to who we are as people is clear, however, such ethical thinking in academia does not seem to apply to bisexuals in South Korea. What we have found here is that bisexuals *are* present in South Korea and this does not fit with the normalization of queer or even sexual studies in the country. Bisexuals are not only stigmatized by the constant need to either assert themselves as something that they are not—heterosexual, homosexual, or some blend thereof—but are also ignored in terms of the sexual agency roles they may play that goes beyond pedestrian notions of bipolarities.

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<sup>201</sup> Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1, p. 5

## **5. Summary**

As presented above, this chapter showed how bisexuality is perceived in South Korea as well as to how the meaning of sex disrupts notions of sexual identity performativity and sexual behavior. It also presents arguments on how bisexuality can intervene in the growing bipolar divide of homo and heterosexual studies, and how discrimination amongst and between queers is being produced in South Korea. It made the following observations:

First, heterosexuals see sexual behavior and desire as important attributes in why bisexuals consider themselves bisexual. However, heterosexuals also think that this sexual identity often serves as a decoy to hide one's homosexuality. On the other hand, homosexuals and bisexuals feel that sexual behavior is merely the result of one's bisexual identity, which is primarily a factor of intimacy and relationship fulfillment. What is perceived on the outside is simply a sexual behavior that may not necessarily be the basis of these queer identities.

Second, all respondents stated that the Internet served as their only real source for understanding the meaning of sex. They also showed a high variance in the meaning and boundaries of sex-versus-non-sexual activities. This loose meaning of sex in South Korea has often led to sexual activity

between men who even consider themselves exclusively heterosexual and the interpretation of that activity as non-sexual—even if it entails mutual genital stimulation. They argued that their sexual identities are not negated or constituted by such behavior. In essence, a man who leads a heterosexual performative life can also engage in sexual acts (loosely defined) with men without losing his heterosexual identity. As such, some heterosexuals do not see their behavior as part of their performative/ gendered identity as heterosexual men.

Third, bisexual discrimination by homosexuals and other queers is a growing issue that makes dealing with social stigmas caused by one's bisexual identity even more difficult. As a result, bisexuals are further marginalized within the homo-heterosexual divide.

## VII. Conclusion

D.H. Lawrence had the impression—that psychoanalysis was shutting sexuality up in a bizarre sort of box painted with bourgeois motifs, in a kind of rather repugnant artificial triangle, thereby stifling the whole of sexuality as a production of desire so as to recast it along entirely different lines, making of it a ‘dirty little secret’, a dirty little family secret, a private theater rather than the fantastic factory of nature and production.

Gilles Deleuze, *An Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*  
(1983)

South Korea’s ideas regarding sex, sexual change, sexual identity, and all things sexual should be seen as an academic wet dream for gender, sexuality, identity, post-colonial, post-Confucian, and modernization scholars around the world. There is something ultimately worthy in endeavoring to understand such complexity in simple or even pedestrian terms, but simplicity can often be mistaken for accuracy. And with this in mind, this thesis initially set out to do just that. In doing so, however it found that the queer rubric simply does not have the capacity as yet to deal with the dynamic interspersed reality of sex, the act, sex, the idea, sex, the gender, and sex, the mystery in South Korea. However, it did so in earnest and came up with the following conclusions to the questions that initiated the research itself.

First, in addressing the question of how bisexuality is interpreted in South Korea in terms of sexual behavior and sexual identity it pinpointed



several findings. One is the impact of rapid economic development and the consequent social desire to appear 'modernized' globally. This compressed modernity<sup>202</sup> on the social level can be seen in academia, political movements, media, and even in law. The façade has in turn led to a somewhat hasty adoption of a queer rubric, one that does not necessarily represent or adequately define the Korean sexualities that encompass it—ultimately leading to an underappreciation of the country's true sexual uniqueness.

Though only a cursory investigation of bisexuality in the country, this research showed that the view of bisexuality as a sexual identity is intensely one of intimacy rather than simply connected to whether a man chooses to have erotic sexual relations with both men and women. In doing so, it also challenges Cho's findings regarding the dual lives that gays live. It is genuinely important to consider whether his gays are the South Korean *gei*'s as mentioned above and whether the inclusion of bisexuality would change the notions of gay sexual identities in the country. With the findings regarding bisexuality, should not intimacy in such calculations regarding the study of sexual identities as oppose to simple blanket adoption of those identities by a certain community matter? This research argues that

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<sup>202</sup> See Kyungsup Chang (2010). *South Korea under Compressed Modernity: Familial Political Economy in Transition*. Routledge Advances in Korean Studies.

bisexuality must be considered in South Korea's sexual identity studies; the bisexual identity that exists here is a matter of intimacy not simply of the male genitalia.

Second, this research found that when bisexuals differentiate themselves from other sexualities in the country, they do so in accord with a perceived queer rubric that is neither indigenous nor wholly appropriate. In some ways, it is virtually impossible to adopt the fixed bisexual ideals that have been adopted in countries like the US. In other words, the idea that bisexuals fall within, or are a mixture of the following patterned combinations is both impossible to assess and burgeoning on cultural imperialism:

- a. Bisexuals are on the margins of both gay and straight.<sup>203</sup>
- b. Bisexuality marks the boundary between gay and straight.
- c. Bisexuals move between gay and straight.
- d. Bisexuals breach gay and straight.
- e. Bisexual space encircles gay and straight.

This is primarily because gay and straight are ideals that are premised on concepts of masculinity, i.e. codified & often socially prescribed behaviors.

As mentioned above, though South Korea has readily accepted concepts such as gay/ homosexual, straight/ heterosexual, and bisexuality, the intrinsic attributes that typically define these identities form within non-

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<sup>203</sup> Gay & straight refer to gendered masculinities that may or may not denote sexual preference regarding orientation.

Korean (often Western) countries, and may not even exist in South Korea.

From the research above, for example, even sexual contact and its relationship to intimacy throws such generic categorical analysis out. In the case of the bisexuals interviewed, intimacy played more of a role in their sexual identity choices than did comparing themselves within a homo-heterosexual divide.

Third, beyond the homo-heterosexual paradigm, which has proven a major obstacle for bisexual representation in the country, the lack of addressing sexual orientation in education, the petrifying notion of sexual ostracism in the military, and the idea of fulfilling a familial responsibility while protecting oneself financially are real issues that make both bisexuality a viable and impossible identity to accept. As such, much more information is necessary to really understand if these social obstacles themselves have led to the need of person's with particular sexual behavioral intimacies to choose certain sexual identities over others. Particularly, in the wake of media censorship, an assault and ban on the definitive source for sexual exploration for youth in the country, coupled with an all-male compulsory military duty, create an environment in which the effects on sexual behavior and identity formation cannot be overlooked. Not only could such a consideration build an additional layer of

understanding in gender studies, but it could also lead to revolutionary ideas regarding the interpretation of sex, the act, in general.

And last, the existence of bisexuality has long been overlooked in quests to understand what has often been misappropriated as gay, lesbian, or gay/lesbian-specific issues. This omission has led to a genuine disregard for the “B” (and the “T”) of these so-called LGBT+XYZ movements. With this in mind, political movements to eradicate and protect against discrimination and social ills such as rape—that is only recognized between a man (the assailant) and woman (the victim) in South Korea—or human rights & forced military conscription—where proving one’s gay exclusivity is virtually impossible—begs the question of whether sex-based politics and academia have flown the nest of reality. Queer studies is a new and fast developing academic discipline in South Korea, one that has from its outset been imprisoned and *disciplined* within and often by feminism and feminists in the country. As such, sexual identity, power politics, and citizenship matter more than, and even negate any regard of or interest in the notions of *sex*, the act, which often constitutes these identities. While promoting the idea of sexual equality, awareness, and protection, the academic ejaculation that should be building has instead led to a modernization-directed, semi-tumescence of ideas and effort.

The full appreciation of both the uniqueness, and even the lack thereof, of the South Korean experience is an essential one that can change how we analyze and understand the connection between sexual behavior and sexual identity. By studying bisexuality, which is arguably a nascent sexual identity in the country, it was possible to momentarily break free of the homo-heterosexual/ gay-straight divides, while still working somewhat within the vicinity of these weakly developed sexual binaries in South Korea. However, much research needs to be done in terms of how the interpretation of sexual behavior, not simply sexual identities, impacts society. In particular, more research in terms of male-male relations of intimacy in South Korea could provide a new interpretation of *gei* as well as ultimately enhance consideration and understanding of bisexuals in the country. Such work could prove valuable in breaking free from the “bizarre sort of box” that binds sexuality and really get at the inner workings of Deleuze’s fantastic factory.

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## **Appendix A: Korean-version of Interview Questions.**

### **인터뷰 질문**

#### **방법:**

인터뷰의 목적: 성적으로 왕성한 남성과의 인터뷰를 통해 양성애(자)의 의미와 양성애의 행동이 무엇인가 또는 양성애자의 아이덴티티가 모호한 상태이거나 파악과정에 있는 경우 그 의미와 행동이 어떤 식으로 나타나고 존재하는가에 대한 연구이다. 양성애자의 성적체성보다는 한국의 게이/바이 커뮤니티에서 양성애자의 의미를 발굴하는 작업이다.

소수집단을 보호하거나 관리하거나 해방 시키거나 교육 시키는 정책의 수립을 논하기 전에 그 집단의 멤버들이 누구인가를 알아야 하고 어떻게, 왜, 어떤 식으로 참여하게 된 것인가를 먼저 알아야 한다. 이런 것은 특히 성적인 사회집단을 (공동체) 다룰 때 아주 중요한 점이다. 담화적 기반 데이터로 한국에서는 성사회학과 섹슈얼리티학에 대한 이해를 깊게 할 수 있고 일반적으로 성지향의 배열을 다시 정리할 수 있다는 것이 내 주장의 요지이다.

#### **참여자의 선택:**

본 연구에서는 1 회 약 60 분동안 총 20 여명을 1 대 1 인터뷰를 하여 참여자의 섹슈얼리티 및 섹슈얼리티의 의미와 행동을 분석한 작업이다. 참여자들은 자발적으로 게이나 바이 섹슈얼리티적인 SNS 스마트기계 앱 광고에 응답한 사람들이다. 그리고, 모든 참여자들은 연구자가 한국인이 아닌 것을 알고 있다. 참여자들이 먼저 연구자에게 연락 한 후에 연구자는 모든 참여자들에게는 논문 연구를 위해서만 이 섹슈얼리티 앱을 사용하고 있다고 알려 준다. 그리고 혹시 참여하고 싶으면 60 분동안 카페에서 1 대 1 로 인터뷰를 할 수 있는 지를 물어 본다. 돈이나 다른 보상을 줄 계획이 없다는 말씀도 드린다. 그 대신에 참여자의 생각, 고민, 아이디어에 귀를 기울이는 것일 뿐이다.

**참여자의 수:** 약 20 명.

**남성만 연구하는 이유:**

한국에서는 남녀의 사회적 책임과 역할이 서로 다르고 (특 8) 섹슈얼리티 커뮤니티 자체도 서로 다르다.<sup>204</sup> 본 연구에서는 남성 양성애자를 중심으로 분석하며 여성양성애자 연구에는 다른 틀이 필요하기 때문에 여성 양성애자는 포괄하지 않는다.

#### **인터뷰 내용:**

인터뷰를 전부 다 한국어로 하기로 하고, 대상자와 인터뷰어의 목소리를 녹음기로 녹음한다. 비디오 또는 사진을 사용하지 않는다. 인터뷰의 구성은 다음과 같다:

#### **상대방에게 하는 말씀:**

1. 처음에는 인터뷰를 섹슈얼리티에 대한 내용으로 연구에서만 활용한다고 말씀을 드리고, 대상자의 본명을 기록해도 되는지 여부를 물어 본다. 그리고, 대상자에게는 어떤 질문에 대답하기 싫거나 어려우면 “넘어가라”라고 말하면 문제 없다고 말씀 드린다. 어떤 질문에 더 깊이 말씀을 하고 싶으면 그것도 가능하다고 말씀 드린다. 마지막으로 시작하기전에 언제든지 인터뷰를 그만 하고 싶으면 그렇게 할 수 있다고 말씀을 드린다.
2. 대상자에게는 인터뷰를 녹음해도 되는지 또는 글로 옮겨 기록해도 되는지를 물어 본다. 그리고 연구참여자용 설명서 및 동의서에 서명을 부탁한다.

#### **인터뷰 질문:**

##### **참여자의 기본 정보:**

1. 현재 나이는 어떻게 되십니까?
2. 현재 직업이 무엇입니까?
3. 학력은 어떻게 되십니까? (대학교나 대학교 이상은 대학 이름도 물어본다)<sup>205</sup>.
4. 어떤 성별입니까? (예: 남성; 여성)<sup>206</sup>
5. 본인의 성적 지향은 무엇입니까? (이해하지 못하는 경우에: “남성과 성관계가 있었습니까?” “여성이랑 성관계가 있었습니까?”)
6. 성관계가 있었으면 어떤 성향 역할을 하셨습니까? (모르는 경우에: 7로 넘어간다)

##### **성관계의 첫 경험:**

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<sup>204</sup> 게이바가 많은 경우, 유명한 커밍아웃한 남성도 몇 명있고, 매디어에서도 남성의 섹슈얼리티는 사회적인 대화도 시작했지만, 여성의 레즈비언이나 남성으로 수술로 한 여성 트랜스 젠더는 아직까지 없는 경우이다.

<sup>205</sup> 학교 수준이 다를 경우 답도 다르게 나올 수 있는 지는 의문이다.

<sup>206</sup> 확인 하기 위해서만 합니다. 본 연구는 남성 중심으로 한다.

7. 혹시님의 성적 지향을 아시는 분이 계셨던 적이 있습니까? (예: 친구 몇명, 가족이나, 아니면 공공연하게 알고 있다)
- ㄱ. 친구 경우에: 아는 친구들은 같은 성적 지향이십니까?
  - ㄴ. 몇 살에 가족분들과 말씀 하셨습니다?
8. 첫 성관계는 언제 (나이로)였습니까? 어디서 어떤 사정/ 계기로 하셨습니다?
- ㄱ. 군대에서 한 경우에: (17b로 넘어간다)
  - ㄴ. “사정”/ “계기” 모르는 경우에: (예로: 술 마신 후, 강제로, 구슬리다, 실험적으로, 기타)
- 8-b 이 경험은 본인의 섹슈얼리티 기반이 되었습니까? 그렇다면, 왜 그렇게 생각하십니까?  
그렇지 않다면 왜 입니까?
9. 첫 경험의 상대방은 어떤 관계였습니다? (친구, 가족분, 기타)
10. 첫 경험에 어떤 생각을 하셨습니다? 그 때는 자신이 행동의 의미를 행동이 인식했습니까?
11. 첫 경험한 사람과 계속 성관계를 가졌습니까?
- ㄱ. 그렇다는 경우에: 어느정도 지속되었습니까?
  - ㄴ. 아닌 경우에: 왜 그렇셨습니까?
12. 첫 경험은 혹시 다른 사람과 이야기 하셨습니다?
- ㄱ. 그렇다는 경우에: 그 분은 어떤 관계였습니까? 그 분의 반응이 어떠셨습니까?

#### **성관계의 의미:**

13. 성교란 무엇이라고 생각하십니까? 성교이라는 행동은 어떤 행위였습니까?
- ㄱ. 말씀 안 한 경우에: 키스나 뽀뽀하는 행동은 성행위라고 생각하십니까?
  - ㄴ. 말씀 안 한 경우에: 동시에 누구랑 자위하는 행동을 성해위라고 생각하십니까?
  - ㄷ. 말씀 안 한 경우에: 서로 생식기를 손이나 몸으로 만지는 것은 성행위라고 생각하십니까? (모르는 경우: 생식기는 성기로 바꿈)
14. 아까 말씀 하였던 성교와 성행위는 다 똑 같다고 생각하십니까? 아니면 몇 가지는 조금 다르다고 생각하십니까?
15. 언제 섹스와 성관계를 알게 됐습니까? 그리고 처음에 어떻게 알게 됐습니까?
- ㄱ. 미디어로: 어떤 미디어로 알게 되었습니까? 보통 어디서 언제 이런 미디어를 사용하셨습니다? 몇살부터 이런 미디어를 사용하기 시작하셨습니다? (성관계 없이)? 이런 미디어는 혹시 자기의 섹슈얼리티에 자연스럽게 영향을 미쳤다고 생각하십니까? 아니면, 이 미디어는 자기의 섹슈얼리티를 발산할 수단이 되었다고 생각하십니까? 그리고 이런 미디어를, 특히 성관계를 배울 과정에 누구랑 같이 접한 적이 있었습니까?

ㄴ. 다른 사람으로 부터: 그 분이랑 어떤 관계였습니까 (친구, 가족분, 기타)? 이런 대화나 경험을 하셨습니까?

ㄷ. 교육을 통해: 좀 자세하게 설명해 주시겠습니까? 혹시 첫 경험한 직전에 교육을 통해 배운 성관계가 의식적으로 생각이 나셨습니까 (술마신 후/ 강제로 제외)? 본인의 교육은 거로 본인의 섹슈얼리티 기반이 될 것이었습니까?

ㄹ. 종교로: 좀 자세하게 설명해 주시겠습니까? 혹시 첫 경험한 직전에 종교를 통해 배운 성관계가 의식적으로 생각이 나셨습니까 (술마신 후/ 강제로 제외)? 본인의 종교는 거로 본인의 섹슈얼리티 기반이 될 것이었습니까?

ㅁ. 좀 자세하게 설명해 주시겠습니까? 혹시 첫 경험에 군대에서 배운 성관계가 의식적으로 생각이 나셨습니까 (술마신 후/ 강제로 제외)? 본인의 군대 경험은 거로 본인의 섹슈얼리티 기반이 될 것이었습니까?

### **성관계:**

16. 혹시 남자친구나 여자친구는 사귀어 적이 있거나 사귀고 있습니까?

ㄱ. 남자친구가 있(었)는 경우: 몇 명과 어느정도 사귀었습니까? 혹시 다른 분도 사귀는 것을 아셨습니까? 같이 성욕이 왕성하셨습니까? 그리고 성욕은 무엇을 뜻합니까? 보통 어떤 장소에서 성관계를 하셨습니까?

ㄴ b. 혹시 동시에 여자친구도 사귀어 적이 있었습니까? 그렇다면, 여자친구는 본인이 남자와 성관계가 있는지 아셨거나 알고 있었습니까?

ㄴ c. 아셨던 경우에: 여자친구랑 문제 없었습니까?

ㄴ d. 혹시 동시에 여자와 성관계도 있었습니까? 그렇다면, 남자친구가 자기는 여자와 성관계가 있는지 있었는지 아시(셨)습니까?

ㄴ e. 아셨던 경우에: 남자친구와 문제가 없었습니까?

ㄴ. 여자친구가 있(었)는 경우: 몇 명과 어느정도 사귀었습니까? 혹시 다른 분도 사귀는 것을 아셨습니까? 같이 성욕이 왕성하셨습니까? 그리고 성욕은 무엇을 뜻합니까? 보통 어떤 장소에 성관계를 하셨습니까?

ㄴ b. 혹시 동시에 남자친구도 사귀어 적이 있었습니까? 그렇다면, 남자친구는 본인이 여자와 성관계 있는지 있었는지 아셨습니까?

ㄴ c. 아셨던 경우에: 남자친구랑 문제 없었습니까?

ㄴ d. 혹시 동시에 남자랑 성관계도 있었습니까? 그렇다면, 여자친구는 본인이 여자와 성관계가 아셨습니까?

ㄴ e. 아셨던 경우에: 여자친구랑 문제 없었습니까?

ㄷ. 남녀친구가 없었던 경우: 좀 자세하게 설명해 주시겠습니까? 혹시 자기의 섹슈얼리티와 관계가 있었습니까?

ㄹ. 남녀친구 개념/ \*호칭이 싫은 경우: 좀 자세하게 설명해 주시겠습니까? 혹시 자기의 섹슈얼리티와 관계가 있었습니까?

ㄹ b. 남녀친구 없었는데, 혹시 남자와 여자랑 성관계가 있었습니까? 몇 명과 어느정도 같이 성관계를 가졌습니까? 그리고 성욕이라는 뜻을 무엇입니까? 보통 어떤 장소에 성관계를 하셨습니까? 남자와 여자 둘 다 같이 성관계가 있었습니까? 그리고 혹시 본인이 남자에게 서로 여성도 같이 한다고 말씀하셨습니까? (아닌 경우에: 왜, 그랬습니까?)

1. 군대 혹시 가셨습니까? 몇살에 가셨습니까? 어떤 군대 가셨습니까?

ㄱ. 군대에서는 성경험 있었습니까? (있었던 경우: 병영에서 아니면 제대할 때)

ㄱ b. 병영에서 하신 경우: 혹시 견책이나 처벌을 받았습니까? (return to 8 if not already answered)

#### 사회접근:

18. 혹시 자기의 섹슈얼리티는 “나쁘다”고 생각하십니까? 좀 자세하게 설명해 주시겠습니까?

19. 교육을 통해 혹시 자기의 섹슈얼리티를 배운 적이 있었습니까? 또는 학교 선생님께 자기의 섹슈얼리티에 대해 질문 해 본적이 있었습니까? (있거나/ 없거나) 좀 자세하게 설명해 주시겠습니까?

20. 무방지적 성 관계 해 본 적이 있었습니까? (대답한 후) 혹시 오랄 섹스해 본 적이 있었습니까? (있는경우: 오랄용 콘돔 쓰셨습니까?)<sup>207</sup>

21. 혹시 이 SNS 앱을 원나잇이나 번개를 하기 위해 써 본 적이 있었습니까?

ㄱ. 있는 경우: 몇번 정도 하셨습니까?

ㄱ b. 원나잇이나 번개를 한 분이란 혹시 친구가 된 적이 있었습니까?<sup>208</sup>

22. 혹시 이 SNS 앱으로 친구를 사귀어 본 적이 있었습니까?

23. 혹시 종교 있습니까?

ㄱ. 있는 경우: 교회나 모이는 장소에 다른 분들과 함께 가십니까? 혹시 자기의 종교를 통해 본인의 섹슈얼리티를 배웠습니까? 본인의 종교에서는 성관계를 어떻게 생각하십니까? 같은 신앙을 가진 분들과 자기의 섹슈얼리티를 이야기한 적 있었습니까?

<sup>207</sup> 이 질문은 두 가지 의미를 포함 된다. 하나는 전 물어봤던 섹스 행동에 오랄 대상자의 시각으로 사실 성 행동인 지를 알 수 있고, 또 하나는 무방지적 성 관계를 사실 있었는 지나 없었는 지를 알 수 있음.

<sup>208</sup> 이 질문은 페티시이나 섹슈얼리티 (바이-호기심/ bi-curious) 의 행동을 구별하기 위해 묻는 것이다.



24. 자기 가족 구성 좀 설명 해 주시겠습니까?
25. 혹시 다른 분들이랑 본인의 성적 지향 인터뷰를 해 본 적이 있었습니까?
26. 혹시 한국에서 본인의 섹슈얼리티 어떻게 생각합니까?<sup>209</sup>
27. 혹시 해외에 가 본 적이 있었습니까?
  - ㄱ. 있는 경우: 어디서 가셨습니까? 몇 살에 가셨습니까? 어느정도 있었습니까?

#### **대답하기 싫어하거나 어려운 경우:**

모든 질문에 대답이 필요하지는 않다. 거꾸로 보면 대답 안 하는게 또 의미가 있는 것이다. 이런 방식으로 참여자가 어떤 정보를 아주 프라이버시적으로 여기는지를 알 수도 있다.

#### **연구 문제점과 특징:**

모든 참여자들은 연구자가 한국인이 아닌 것을 알고 있어서 인터뷰의 결과는 오차(skewed)가 발생할 수 있다. 반면 한국인 아닌 사람과 인터뷰를 하면 한국사회의 금기나 금압을 벗어나서 더 자유롭고 솔직하게 자기의 성 관계와 섹슈얼리티에 대한 이야기를 나눌 수 있다. 또 한편으로는 자신이 국가 이미지를 망치면 안 된다는 생각에 소극적으로 대답하거나 반대로 정치적 급진성을 과시하기 위해 과장된 응답을 할 수도 있다. 이 때도 오차가 발생할 수 있다.

또 다른 문제는 SNS 앱을 사용해서 일반적인 성집단보다는 소수집단 중 더욱 소수인 성집단의 성욕 과잉 성적 환자들의 대답과 데이터가 포괄된 경우를 생각할 수 있을 것 같다. 그런데 참여자는 섹슈얼리티분문제가 사회적 의제로 다루어지기를 원하는 것으로 보인다.

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<sup>209</sup> 이 질문의 목적은 대상자가 자기의 생각을 포함해 그로별이나 한국의 상황 제외 어떻게 생각하시는 지를 파악할 수 있는 것이다.